

The Catholic Critic

André Bazin on Hollywood Movies

1945–1958

Volume I

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements...3

List of Illustrations...6

Introduction...8

Films in Focus

(all reviews organized chronologically, earliest to latest, by date of publication)

The Human Comedy, Clarence Brown

The Great Dictator, Charles Chaplin

The Magnificent Ambersons, Orson Welles

The Lost Weekend, Billy Wilder

The Best Years of Our Lives, William Wyler

Crossfire, Edward Dmytryk

It's a Wonderful Life, Frank Capra

Fourteen Hours, Henry Hathaway

A Streetcar Named Desire, Elia Kazan, & *Detective Story*, William Wyler

Diplomatic Courier, Henry Hathaway, & *Monkey Business*, Howard Hawks

Stalag 17, Billy Wilder

The Caine Mutiny, Edward Dmytryk

The High and the Mighty, William Wellman

On the Waterfront, Elia Kazan

Broken Lance, Edward Dmytryk

Conquest of Space, Byron Haskin, & *The Racers*, Henry Hathaway

Bad Day at Black Rock, John Sturges

East of Eden, Elia Kazan

Hallelujah, King Vidor

Blackboard Jungle, Richard Brooks

Rebel Without a Cause, Nicholas Ray

The Last Command, Frank Lloyd

The Man with the Golden Arm, Otto Preminger, & *I'll Cry Tomorrow*,
 Daniel Mann
The Gold Rush, Charles Chaplin
The Bottom of the Bottle, Henry Hathaway
While the City Sleeps, Fritz Lang
The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit, Nunnally Johnson
Attack!, Robert Aldrich
Moby Dick, John Huston
The Solid Gold Cadillac, Richard Quine
Bigger than Life, Nicholas Ray
Giant, George Stevens
The Last Hunt, Richard Brooks, & *Seven Men from Now*, Budd
 Boetticher
A King in New York, Charles Chaplin
The Bachelor Party, Delbert Mann, & *Twelve Angry Men*, Sidney Lumet
Bitter Victory, Nicholas Ray
The Killing, Stanley Kubrick
Peyton Place, Mark Robson
A Farewell to Arms, Charles Vidor
Touch of Evil, Orson Welles
The Sheepman, George Marshall
Perri, Paul Kenworthy & Ralph Wright

Film Credits & Directors' Filmographies...198

Illustrations...262

A Bazin Bibliography...290

Index...293

List of Illustrations

1. André Bazin
2. *The Human Comedy* (1943), Clarence Brown
3. *The Great Dictator* (1940), Charles Chaplin
4. *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942), Orson Welles
5. *The Lost Weekend* (1945), Billy Wilder
6. *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946), William Wyler
7. *Crossfire* (1947), Edward Dmytryk
8. *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), Frank Capra
9. *Fourteen Hours* (1951), Henry Hathaway
10. *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951), Elia Kazan
11. *Detective Story* (1951), William Wyler
12. *Diplomatic Courier* (1952), Henry Hathaway
13. *Monkey Business* (1952), Howard Hawks
14. *Stalag 17* (1953), Billy Wilder
15. *The Caine Mutiny* (1954), Edward Dmytryk
16. *The High and the Mighty* (1954), William Wellman
17. *On the Waterfront* (1954), Elia Kazan
18. *Broken Lance* (1954), Edward Dmytryk
19. *Conquest of Space* (1955), Byron Haskin
20. *The Racers* (1955), Henry Hathaway
21. *Bad Day at Black Rock* (1954), John Sturges
22. *East of Eden* (1955), Elia Kazan
23. *Hallelujah* (1929), King Vidor
24. *Blackboard Jungle* (1955), Richard Brooks
25. *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), Nicholas Ray
26. *The Last Command* (1955), Frank Lloyd
27. *The Man with the Golden Arm* (1955), Otto Preminger
28. *I'll Cry Tomorrow* (1955), Daniel Mann
29. *The Gold Rush* (1925), Charles Chaplin
30. *The Bottom of the Bottle* (1956), Henry Hathaway
31. *While the City Sleeps* (1956), Fritz Lang
32. *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1956), Nunnally Johnson

33. *Attack!* (1956), Robert Aldrich
34. *Moby Dick* (1956), John Huston
35. *The Solid Gold Cadillac* (1956), Richard Quine
36. *Bigger than Life* (1956), Nicholas Ray
37. *Giant* (1956), George Stevens
38. *The Last Hunt* (1956), Richard Brooks
39. *The Westerner* (1940), William Wyler
40. *Seven Men from Now* (1957), Budd Boetticher
41. *A King in New York* (1957), Charles Chaplin
42. *The Bachelor Party* (1957), Delbert Mann
43. *Twelve Angry Men* (1957), Sidney Lumet
44. *Bitter Victory* (1957), Nicholas Ray
45. *The Killing* (1956), Stanley Kubrick
46. *Peyton Place* (1957), Mark Robson
47. *A Farewell to Arms* (1957), Charles Vidor
48. *Touch of Evil* (1958), Orson Welles
49. *The Sheepman* (1958), George Marshall
50. *Perri* (1957), Paul Kenworthy & Ralph Wright

Introduction

Bazin and the Cinema

Upon failing the competitive examination for his teaching qualification in October 1941 because of a stammer, André Bazin entered a period of doubt and depression. It was then, while living in Paris during the Occupation, that he discovered the cinema. As Dudley Andrew remarks, among the circles in which Bazin moved at that time, and indeed throughout the entire French intellectual elite, the cinema was held in a contempt that the arrival of sound and talking pictures had only reinforced (*André Bazin*, 1990: 53). If Bazin was aware of this class-based contempt, it was probably because of his socially modest origins. At school, he had followed the primary curriculum, that is to say, the short curriculum designed for those who would not normally progress to secondary education; nominally, he was able to escape this fate thanks to his acceptance for teacher-training, first at the École normale d'instituteurs and then at the École normale supérieure de Saint-Cloud.

Nonetheless, Bazin's hostility towards the conservatism of the educational system probably played a role in his conversion to a belief in the cultural virtues of cinema. From 1943 on, in the Studio des Ursulines cinema in Paris, he organized semi-clandestine film club meetings, an environment in which he forged the analytic abilities that after the Liberation would make him a pillar of the cultural and popular-education association "Travail et Culture" (Work & Culture). However, in contrast to the cinephile film-society movement of the 1920s, which was influenced by the artistic avant-garde, the movement animated by Bazin after the Liberation took inspiration from the idea that cinema might represent a truly popular art, one that would allow critics to mediate between cinema and the public through film-society screenings

and discussions. Beyond the activity of film societies, Bazin's writing on film in a popular daily newspaper like *Le Parisien libéré*, as well as in an intellectual or learned, specialized journal such as *La Revue du cinéma*, was a means of reaching the widest possible public. In fact, one of his first published articles, in *Bulletin intérieur de la Maison des Lettres* (December 1942), is titled "Peut-on s'intéresser au cinéma?"—or, "Can we be interested in the cinema?"

It must be remembered that the postwar years, when Bazin matured as a critic, represent a fertile albeit difficult and conflict-ridden period in the history of French cinema. Indeed, it is no secret that French film production underwent a serious crisis in the postwar era due to an outmoded technical infrastructure dating from the Occupation and war years, and also due to competition from the Hollywood movies that filled the majority of French screens following the Franco-American Blum-Byrnes trade agreement of 1946. An unprecedented mobilization of the industry, involving trade unions and political and cultural organizations close to the French Communist Party, led to the renegotiation of the agreements and, in September 1948, to the passing of legislation that was designed to help the French film industry, and that allowed the resumption of film production on a larger scale. At this time Bazin not only was discovering and defending American cinema, in particular that of Welles and Chaplin, against both the old guard of pre-war critics and the young (Stalinist) vanguard of *L'Écran français*, he was also following attentively the incipient renaissance of postwar French cinema. In other words, with one eye on Hollywood and the other on Paris, Bazin was watching—and writing—the whole time.

Bazin, Realism, and Christianity

While the merest rumor of the transcendent is enough to scandalize most film theorists, it helps to explain André Bazin's enduring appeal not only among secular moviegoers, but also among those at least open to the possibility of the divine. Reading Bazin, one never has the sense of a professional flogging his secular academic specialty in return for institutional preferment. Instead, one comes into contact with a person—or, more correctly, a soul—bound by a sacred charge to inquire

after truth. The luminous quality of Bazin's writing can no doubt be attributed in part to his chronic frail health, for reality stands out in colors all the more radiant for being contemplated under the shadow of death. But, even though it comprises the biggest stumbling block even for critics otherwise congenial to Bazin, there is no denying the primary source of his inspiration: faith. I'd like to emphasize that in this introduction, because Bazin was an intellectual and a Christian—better, a Christian intellectual—when it was still possible publicly to be both and at the same time to be taken seriously. Obviously, I don't think this is true anymore—certainly not in the United States—and I lament that fact, for the sake of intellectuals as well as Christians.

At the heart of Bazin's strictures on cinematic realism lies the conviction that the movie camera, by the simple act of photographing the world, testifies to the miracle of God's creation. It is sanctioned to do so precisely—and paradoxically—because it is an invention of science. Throughout the ages, Bazin argues, mankind has dreamed of being able to see the surface of the world faithfully copied in art (see "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," 1945, translated in volume 1 of *What Is Cinema?*). He ascribes this wish to what he calls the "mummy complex" (9, *What Is Cinema?*, vol. 1)—an innate human need to halt the ceaseless flow of time by embalming it in an image. But it was not until the development of photography in the nineteenth century that this appetite for the real could be fully satisfied. For Bazin, a photograph holds an irrational power to persuade us of its truth because it results from a process of mechanical reproduction in which human agency plays no part. A painting, however lifelike, is still the obvious product of human craft and intention, whereas the photographic image is just what happens automatically when the light reflected from objects strikes a layer of sensitive chemical emulsion.

"Photography," Bazin writes in "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," "affects us like a phenomenon in nature, like a flower or a snowflake whose vegetable or earthly origins are an inseparable part of their beauty" (13, *What Is Cinema?*, vol. 1). In Bazin's view, it's this objective quality of the photograph—the fact that it is first of all a sensory datum and only later perhaps a work of art—which gives

the medium its privileged relationship with the real. It follows that both photography and its spawn, the motion picture, have a special obligation toward reality. Their principal responsibility is to document the world before attempting to interpret or criticize it. And for Bazin, this moral duty is ultimately a sacred one—the photographic media being, in effect, preordained to bear endless witness to the beauty of the cosmos.

Bazin's criticism is not remotely doctrinal in its Catholicism, however; it is fundamentally holistic, its source lying elsewhere than in aesthetic dissection. His true filmmaker attains power through "style," which is not a thing to be expressed but an inner orientation enabling an outward search or quest. Such spiritual sensitivity and its enablement through film are central to Bazin's view of film as obligated to God, to honor God's universe by using film to render the reality of the universe and, through its reality, its mystery-cum-musicality. This view led Bazin to certain specific espousals—of Italian neorealism, the technique of deep focus, and more—but these were all secondary consequences for him of the way that film could best bear witness to the miracle of the creation. Éric Rohmer, who became a filmmaker in the Bazinian tradition but who in the 1950s was a critical-editorial colleague of Bazin's, has said: "Without any doubt, the whole body of Bazin's work is based on one central idea, an affirmation of the objectivity of the cinema" (5, *What Is Cinema?*, vol. 1).

Since Bazin's general idea was to discover in the nature of the photographic image an objectively realistic feature, the concept of objective reality as a fundamental quality of the cinematic shot in fact became the key to his theoretical and critical work. For him, the photographic origin of film explains the novelty of and fascination with the cinema. The picture is a kind of double of the world, a reflection petrified in time but brought back to life by cinematic projection; in other words, everything that is filmed once *was* in reality. A rapt Bazin thus speaks of the ontological realism of the cinema, and, according to him, the camera is naturally the objective tool with which to achieve it. He granted this camera a purifying power and a superhuman impassiveness that could restore the virgin object in all its purity to the attention and love of the viewer. And he saw almost perfect examples of

this “brute representation” of the cinema in documentary as well as scientific films, in which the filmmaker interferes or tampers very little with nature. Bazin saw such brute representation additionally in the deep-focus *mise-en-scène* of William Wyler’s films, which tended toward a neutrality or objectivity that was eminently moral and liberal, hence perfectly characteristic of American freedom and democracy. For him, only ontological realism of this type was capable of restoring to the object and its setting the spiritual density of their being.

Predictably, Bazin’s thesis has been assailed for placing the metaphysical cart before the materialist horse. And, as if resolved to tweak the noses of his Marxist opponents, Bazin propounds the fanciful notion that technical change arises less as the outcome of economic and historical forces than from an ineffable “something” one can only call spiritual will (see “The Myth of Total Cinema,” 1946, translated in volume 1 of *What Is Cinema?*). Photography and cinema, together with such innovations as color stock, sound recording, anamorphic lenses, and 3-D, are thus successive responses to an obscurely planted desire for an ever more perfect approximation of the real. Although Bazin is generally too discreet a writer to let his theological slip show, it’s clear that here he conceives of such artistic and industrial gains as prompted by an esoteric design. His thought in this instance betrays its sizeable debt to the science-cum-mysticism of the radical Catholic visionary Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, who projected an evolutionary spiraling of human consciousness until it fuses with divine revelation. (In more secular terms, there’s also a tinge of Sartrean existentialism in Bazin’s emphasis on a cinema of “being” in the act or process of “becoming.”)

Still, Bazin sets a hypothetical limit to his “myth of total cinema.” If the cinema ever could succeed in becoming the exact double of reality, it would also fail—since it would then cease to exist as cinema. Like a mathematical asymptote, filmic representation is always doomed to fall a little short of its goal. But if cinema never quite merges with life, that’s what allows it to be an art form whose mission is to reveal life. Bazin concedes that there is no art without artifice and that one must therefore surrender a measure of reality in the process of translating it onto celluloid. The cinematic staging or rendering of the real can be

carried out in untold ways, however, so it would be more suitable to speak of filmic “realisms” than of a single, definitive realist mode. And in this respect Bazin comes closer to endorsing the postmodern shibboleth of pluralism than his adversaries tend to realize—though he happily foregoes postmodernism’s nihilism.

Yet his pristine vision of an aesthetic reality remains, strictly speaking, the inaccessible alpha and omega of the movie medium, since it is inevitably contaminated by human subjectivity. Individual films and filmmakers all carve up the unbroken plenitude of the real, imposing on it style and meaning. But the crucial distinction for Bazin is (in an oft-quoted phrase from “The Evolution of the Language of Cinema,” 1950-55, translated in volume 1 of *What Is Cinema?*) between “those directors who put their faith in the image and those who put their faith in reality” (24). He took a notoriously dim view, for example, of Robert Wiene’s *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) and other films made in the German expressionist style, because he judged their elaborate manipulations of lighting and décor to be a willful attempt to bend reality out of shape and force it to reflect perverse states of mind. What Bazin objected to in the work of Sergei Eisenstein was precisely how the Soviet director splintered reality into a series of isolated shots, which he then reassembled through the art of montage.

Indeed, Bazin’s basic position cannot be understood except as a strong reaction against principles of filmmaking that had prevailed before then: of subjectivity, of an arrangement and interpretation of the world—what might be called Eisenstein-Pudovkin principles (different though those two men were) in editing. Bazin was opposed to such an approach as “self-willed” and “manipulative,” as the imposition of opinion where the filmmaker should try, in effect, to stand aside and reveal reality. By contrast, the first line of Pudovkin’s *Film Technique* (1929) is: “The foundation of film art is *editing*” (xiii). Bazin upheld *mise-en-scène* against editing or montage because, to him, the former represented “true continuity” and reproduced situations more realistically, leaving the interpretation of a particular scene to the viewer rather than to the director’s viewpoint through cutting. Consistent with this view, he argued in support of both the shot-in-depth and the long or

uninterrupted take, and commended the switch from silent to talking pictures as one step toward the attainment of total realism on film.

The Russians themselves had derived their methods from American movies, especially those of D. W. Griffith, and American cinema had continued in the “editing” vein. In Hollywood pictures and, through their example, in most pictures everywhere, the guiding rule was to edit the film to conform to the flow of the viewer’s attention, to anticipate and control that attention. The director and editor or cutter chose the fraction of space that they thought the viewer would most want to see each fraction of a second: the hero’s face when he declares his love, then the heroine’s reaction, then the door when someone else enters, and so on, bit by bit. Now the Russians’ use of montage had much more complex aims, aesthetic and ideological, than presumed audience gratification of the Hollywood kind, but technically it, too, was a mosaic or discontinuous approach to reality.

Bazin disagreed strongly and, one can legitimately say, religiously with such an approach. He distrusted montage on the ground that its dynamic juxtaposition of images hurtles the viewer along a predetermined path of attention, the aim being to construct a synthetic reality in support of a propagandist or partial (in both senses of the word) message. To Bazin this was a minor heresy, since it arrogated the power of God, who alone is entitled to confer meaning on the universe. But inasmuch as God absents himself from the world and leaves it up to us to detect the signs of his grace, Bazin valued those film artists who respected the mystery embedded in creation.

One such director was the Italian neorealist Vittorio De Sica, who in films like *Bicycle Thieves* (1948) and *Umberto D.* (1952) humbly renounced the hubristic display of authorial personality and thus enabled his audience to intuit the numinous significance of people, things, and places. “The *mise-en-scène* seems to take shape after the fashion of a natural form in living matter,” Bazin wrote in 1951 in “De Sica: *Metteur en scène*” (63, *What Is Cinema?*, vol. 2). He recognized that film art always condenses, shapes, and orders the reality it records, but what he looked for in filmmakers was what he found in De Sica’s work: a kind of spiritual disposition toward reality, an intention to serve it by a

scrupulous effacement of means and a corresponding unwillingness to do violence to it through ideological abstraction or self-aggrandizing technique.

The best director, then—Orson Welles, Roberto Rossellini, Jean Renoir, and F. W. Murnau also rank high for Bazin—is the one who mediates least, the one who exercises selectivity just sufficiently to put us in much the same relation of regard and choice toward the narrative as we are toward reality in life: a director who thus imitates (not arrogates), within his scale, the divine disposition toward man. Other than such an anomalous director as Miklós Jancsó, to whom one reel equals one shot, most modern movie directors, of course, use the reality of the held, “plumbed” shot as well as the mega-reality of montage. One need look no further than the work of Bazin’s venerator François Truffaut for an example of this. And such a balance between montage and *mise-en-scène* in film practice doesn’t smugly patronize Bazin, since no one before him had spoken up so fully and influentially for his side of the question.

Art, *Auteurism*, and Hollywood

Given Bazin’s passionate advocacy of this cinema of “transparency,” it may seem puzzling that he is likewise remembered in film history as an architect of the celebrated *politique des auteurs*. Under his tutelage, the younger journalists at *Cahiers du cinéma* championed such previously patronized talents as Alfred Hitchcock, Howard Hawks, and Douglas Sirk, thereby shifting the critical goalposts forever. (Since many of Bazin’s reviewing colleagues, Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, Rohmer, Claude Chabrol, and Jacques Rivette among them, went on to direct their own films—and thus to become the first generation of cineastes whose work was thoroughly grounded in film history and theory—he is also often regarded as the spiritual father of the *nouvelle vague*, or French New Wave.)

Under Bazin’s tutelage, moreover, the younger journalists at *Cahiers du cinéma* seized on the concept of *mise-en-scène* to raise the important question of the specificity of a cinematographic work of art, which for them (less so for Bazin) lay in its form rather than in its

content, in the *mise-en-scène* and not in the scenario or the dialogue. This concept of specificity was absolutely central to the discussion and validation of American cinema at *Cahiers*. Given the fact that in Hollywood the director often had no more than token control over choice of subject, casting, and the quality of dialogue, all the weight of creativity, all the evidence of personal expression and statement had to be found in the *mise-en-scène*: the visual orchestration of the story, the rhythm of the action, the plasticity and dynamism of the image, the pace and causality introduced through the editing. *Mise-en-scène* thus provided the means by which the *auteur* expressed his thought—and also the means by which the *auteur* could be critically discovered and analyzed.

If the *politique des auteurs* itself caused ripples, and more, in French film culture and beyond, it was not because of the idea of *auteurism* but because the idea was used in *Cahiers du cinéma* with polemical brio to upset established values and reputations. There was nothing new or scandalous in either France, England, or the United States in discussing, say, Murnau, Buñuel, Dreyer, Eisenstein, Renoir, Cocteau, and Bresson or, from America, Stroheim, Welles, and Chaplin, as the *auteurs* of their films. It was a slightly different matter to propose, say, Howard Hawks (whose *Monkey Business* [1952] Bazin reviews in this volume) as an *auteur*, mainly because, unlike Stroheim, Welles, or Chaplin, Hawks had not been noticeably in conflict with the Hollywood production system. It was a significantly different matter when the cultural perspectives brought to bear on the proposal of Hawks as an *auteur* of westerns, gangster movies and comedies derived their terms from classical literature, philosophy, or the history of art. It verged on positive outrage when, at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, such perspectives were brought to bear on, say, Vincente Minnelli or Samuel Fuller, not to mention Don Weis or Edward Ludwig. In other words, the closer *Cahiers* moved to what had been traditionally conceived as the “conveyor belt” end of the cinema spectrum, the more their “serious” discussion of filmmakers seemed outrageously inappropriate—to Bazin as well as to many others.

As it happens, the more the *Cahier* critics outraged in this way, the more acutely they raised crucial questions, however unsystematically, about the status and criticism appropriate to film as an art form in which unsystematic divisions were constantly being made between art and commerce. If *Cahiers du cinéma* came to be associated primarily with American cinema and a revaluation of its status—a revaluation to which Bazin himself generously contributed—it was not because its critics talked about American cinema more than about other cinema (quite simply, they did not), but because American cinema as a whole, so generally ignored, misunderstood or undervalued, provided the most obvious site for engagement with these critical questions. Indeed, there is little doubt that *Cahiers*, and the various debates it stimulated in the United States, brought about significant changes in attitudes toward film, not only among American critics and theorists (like Andrew Sarris, who first sketched out his own *auteur* theory in 1963) but also more widely (and not least among filmmakers themselves).

Although *Cahiers du cinéma* could be said to have been predisposed towards American cinema because of the perspective on film language opened up by Bazin himself in the postwar years—a perspective that did away with some of the traditional distinctions between European and American film, on the one hand, and silent and sound film, on the other—that predisposition undoubtedly owed most, given the political atmosphere of France in the 1950s (and the consequent apolitical nature of much of French intellectual life in the same decade), to the ways in which American cinema was perceived, particularly by Bazin, to relate to American society: it was, often enough, socially “critical,” but critical without being directly “political.” Not only was Hollywood ideologically transparent in the way its films aimed at internalizing and psychologizing—in a word, personalizing—the public and social issues of U.S. history, but its aesthetic and stylistic devices were geared towards locating the value and purpose of the American experience in recognizably commonplace situations and everyday contexts, mainly by means of a visual-dramatic rhetoric, a strategy of persuasion, as “classical” and subtly adaptable as any that past civilizations have produced in periods of hegemony. (See especially, in

this volume, the reviews—among numerous others here—of *The Human Comedy* [1943], *The Best Years of Our Lives* [1946], and *The Bottom of the Bottle* [1956].)

If Bazin's own criticism constitutes a cine-theology, it might almost be said that his ideal *auteur* fulfills the role of saint—an inspired intercessor in or with reality. Bazin's stake in the *politique* can thus probably be traced back to his involvement in the 1930s Christian existential movement known as personalism, which posited the creative individual who takes risks, makes choices, and exercises his or her God-given faculty of free will. It should be added, however, that Bazin eventually distanced himself from the priestly cult of the director-author because he felt it ignored the commercial context in which most movies were produced—a context where the work of art is not necessarily stamped with the personality of its creator, in which the director may not be the one above all who gives a film its distinctive quality. A keen observer of Hollywood cinema (whose “classical” adaptability he was among the first to appreciate), he nonetheless set its gifted practitioners on a lower rung than those masters who answered to his chaste and simple ideals: Renoir, Charlie Chaplin, De Sica, Rossellini, Carl-Theodor Dreyer, and Robert Bresson.

Despite differences in stylistic approach, these film artists converge on the same enigmatic reality like the radii of a mandala. If anything joins them more specifically, it's a concern to find the technical means for a concrete rendering of space and time. And this is another charge that Bazin brought against montage: its sacrifice of the dimensional integrity of the photographed event. Though we live in duration and extension, montage can only cheat on our experience since it is an art of ellipsis. In the name of a higher realism, then, Bazin celebrated the long, uninterrupted take for its capacity to simulate the most elemental aspect of nature—its continuousness. Though Bazin knew, of course, that the camera must restrict itself to slicing out a tiny portion of space, he thought a tactful deployment of the *mise-en-scène* could sustain the illusion of life spilling over the borders of the frame.

His great hero in this regard was Renoir, who, significantly for Bazin, combined long takes with the technique of deep-focus

cinematography. Bazin considered this not just one aesthetic option among others but in fact the very essence of modern cinematic realism. For him, the incalculable virtue of deep focus is its ambiguity: since everything in the film frame can be seen with equal clarity, the audience has to decide for itself what is meaningful or interesting. While a director such as Welles or Wyler (to whose 1941 film *The Little Foxes* Bazin would return again and again) may provide accents or directions in the composition of the image, each nonetheless opens up the possibility that the viewer can, so to speak, do the editing in his or her own head. In short, deep-focus cinematography invites an awareness of both personal freedom and ethical responsibility; in cinema as in life, we must be free to choose our own salvation.

Possibly the best example of Bazin's advocacy of the long take, photographed in depth, occurs in his essay "The Technique of *Citizen Kane*" (1947, translated in *Bazin at Work: Major Essays and Reviews from the Forties and Fifties* [1997]), in particular his analysis of the famous scene depicting Susan Alexander Kane's attempted suicide and its immediate aftermath—a scene that takes place entirely in one shot, in deep focus. Traditional editing, the five or six shots into which this scene could be divided, would give us, according to Bazin, "the illusion of being at real events unraveling before us in everyday reality. But this illusion conceals an essential bit of deceit because reality exists in continuous space and the screen presents us in fact a succession of fragments called 'shots'" (xiv, *Bazin at Work*). Instead, Welles presents the experience whole, in order to give us the same privileges and responsibilities of choice that life itself affords. In "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema," Bazin says further that "*Citizen Kane* is unthinkable shot in any other way but in depth. The uncertainty in which we find ourselves as to the spiritual key or the interpretation we should put on the film is built into the very design of the image" (36, *What Is Cinema?*, vol. 1).

On his death at the age of only forty in 1958, an obituary notice in *L'Esprit* cited Bazin as predicting that "the year 2000 will salute the advent of a cinema free of the artificialities of montage, renouncing the role of an 'art of reality' so that it may climb to its final level on which it

will become once and for all ‘reality made art’” (15, *What Is Cinema?*, vol. 2). But in this as in so much else, Bazin the jubilant millenarian has been proved exactly wrong. At no other period in its history, in fact, has the cinema been so enslaved by escapist fantasy—and never have we been less certain of the status of the real. Now the digitalization of the image threatens to cut the umbilical cord between photograph and referent on which Bazin founded his entire theory.

Moreover, the particular forms of “transparency” that he admired have themselves grown opaque in just a few decades. Italian neorealism increasingly yields up its melodrama and fakery to all those who would look beneath its surface, while the mannered and rigid *mise-en-scène* of deep focus betrays the theatricality of its proscenium-like full shot. In the end, every living realism petrifies, to become a relic in the museum of obsolete artistic styles. Yet, as Bazin might have said (of himself above all), the certainty of failure doesn’t rule out the necessity for each artist to strive to honor reality according to his or her own lights and those of the time. All it requires is a leap of faith.

Bazin, Summa

Despite Bazin’s tragically premature death of leukemia, he left behind a lot of material—realist, idealist, transcendentalist, or otherwise—some of which is now collected in the two volumes of *The Catholic Critic: André Bazin on Hollywood Movies, 1945-1958*. Volume 1 contains, for the first time in English, much of Bazin’s penetrating writing on American cinema: on directors such as Billy Wilder, Frank Capra, Edward Dmytryk, Nicholas Ray, John Huston, and George Stevens; and on films such as *The Great Dictator*, *On the Waterfront*, *Blackboard Jungle*, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, and *Touch of Evil*. Volume 1 of *André Bazin on Hollywood Movies* also features illustrative movie stills and a sizable scholarly apparatus, including a Bazin bibliography, credits of the films discussed as well as filmographies of their directors, and an extensive index.

Yet Volume 1 of *The Catholic Critic: André Bazin on Hollywood Movies, 1945-1958* is aimed, as Bazin would want, not only at scholars, teachers, and critics of film, but also at educated or cultivated

moviegoers and students of the cinema at all levels. In his modesty and simplicity André Bazin considered himself such a student, such an “interested” filmgoer, and it is to the spirit of his humility before the “saint” of cinema, as well as to the steadfastness of his courage in life, that this book is dedicated.

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FILMS

Concerning *The Human Comedy*

I hope that the reader will not hold me to the severity of the paragraph in my last article where I rashly prejudged the quality of the films that the American cinema was now going to deliver to French screens. This was my humble misunderstanding of the commercial wisdom of the distribution agents. By certain competent authorities, the public was courteously advised that, in view of its mental state after the emotions it had just lived through [during World War II], its attention was being diverted from the works of John Ford, William Wyler, King Vidor, Preston Sturges, and even Charlie Chaplin until a later date. There would also be no *Gone with the Wind* [1939, Victor Fleming], no *Rebecca* [1940, Alfred Hitchcock]; and *Of Mice and Men* [1939, Lewis Milestone], for its part, has a story that's too dark, while *The Grapes of Wrath* [1940, John Ford] would just annoy the viewer to death! So instead we will be given some good little gay, sentimental comedies ... and, of course, a few war and propaganda films.

We are aware of the economic problems posed by the current instability of distribution channels and the restrictions on the consumption of electricity. We understand that it would not be very economical to waste on a still sketchy French market works that will later achieve their maximum commercial success elsewhere. But none of this cannot prevent us from being disappointed in our expectations or deceive us as to the real motives of these dilatory measures. That said, to mark the occasion, let's talk about what we've actually seen recently on the screens of the Parisian boulevards: many war movies and documentaries, pure or fictionalized (neither of which give us any rest from our emotions); a few classic sentimental comedies, sometimes good as in *It Started with Eve* [1941, Henry Koster], more often bad like *My*

Sister Eileen [1942, Alexander Hall] or *Mr. and Mrs. Smith* [1941, Alfred Hitchcock]; and especially propagandistic comedies deployed by an America at war.

For the characteristic feature of recent Hollywood production seems to me to lie in a prodigious psychological mobilization. The pragmatic genius of the Americans has naturally deployed the cinema as a powerful teaching and advertising medium. In the end, this is more advertising than propaganda, in that advertising is the liberal form of political persuasion. It consists in orienting, without material constraint, all the intellectual, moral, and emotional resources of the individual. Its aim is not so much to enforce wills as to create habits, to arouse beliefs felt as freely chosen. If the results are the same, the means nevertheless correspond to two very different social psychologies.

Publicity and pedagogy, these are the two kingpins of American propaganda. Certainly, this is not so new a fact. For a long time, the most informed critics have pointed out in the American cinema the defense of a certain social order, the disguised apology for a system not only economic but also political, even moral and religious. We know in particular that some of the best Hollywood comedies are not totally foreign to American domestic politics—such is the case for *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* [1936, Frank Capra], which, it is good to know, served at the time the agrarian policy of President Roosevelt. And it is perhaps even when producers or directors have not consciously sought to propagandize and teach, that they have most surely succeeded in doing so. All of American film, then, reflects profoundly the civilization of which it is the fundamental art. And where historical criticism stops, social psychology still has much to say. But this permanent propagandistic tendency, which otherwise bears witness to the vitality of a national cinema, remains partial, unacknowledged, and sometimes contradictory, as proved by the struggle in the U.S. against censorship. Moreover, never before had American cinema been so formidably mobilized as during the Second World War—in the spirit of a conflict to be entered and won.

An enormous number of didactic films for viewing by the general public, or for the use of military personnel, have been shot over

the last three years according to the precise guidelines of the official U.S. information and psychological services. All questions are dealt with, from the black market for cigarettes in France (a factor that has contributed to the depreciation of the dollar) to military strategy and food hygiene overseas. Walt Disney's Donald Duck, for example, explains [in *The Spirit of '43* (1943)] to the automobile workers of Detroit why they have to pay their taxes. It is thus necessary to consider the current American cinema as a vast enterprise in civic advertising of which Hollywood is only the main commercial branch. To be sure, the totality of cinematic production is not devoted to propaganda, and some great movies are said to have escaped us here in France, but in the dozen or so works we have seen so far (excluding the series of remarkable propaganda films titled *Why We Fight* [1942-45, Frank Capra], which began their release in Europe after this article was written), the one that seems to me to have the most interest may be a seductive, even monstrous propaganda picture, unacceptable, irritating, and yet something that I would like to see again: *The Human Comedy* [1943].

The Human Comedy is directed by Clarence Brown, with a screenplay taken from the contemporaneous novel by William Saroyan. Among the actors in the film is Mickey Rooney. These names deserve *a priori* some consideration, that of Saroyan in particular, the first American writer whose work I have seen adapted to the screen. Let me say at once that this picture, however great the role played by the director, seems without question the work of the writer. And it was not an easy task to tell this non-existent story on film. But already by the very absence of a sequential narrative, we enter the aesthetic universe of Saroyan, where we find again the technique of his novels [e.g., *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze* (1935)] and of his two plays [*The Time of Your Life* and *My Heart's in the Highlands*, both from 1939]: characters, no plot to speak of, and yet an action.

From heaven a voice calls out to us: "I died two years ago, and still I survive in those who have not forgotten me; I survive in my children, in particular in the youngest one, who is called Homer." This is how we are introduced to the life of an American provincial family. The father is dead, the eldest son is a soldier, the teenaged Homer

Macauley divides his time between school and work as telegram delivery boy. The two young women in the story are pretty, wise, and good housewives. The little brother, Ulysses, is content to live and observe things, animals as well as people. He has freckles and extraordinary blue eyes; it will be impossible for us to forget this kid when we re-read Saroyan.

In the post office there are an old telegraph operator, drunken but friendly, and a young sports enthusiast who will join the navy the day after his marriage. At school, the teacher is an older lady who is very strict yet very just and therefore basically very good: that is, she knows when to abandon the letter for the spirit of the law. The students are affable fellows who after class go to steal apricots under the watchful eye of an understanding, forgiving farmer. There are also the town librarian, various soldiers on leave, the guy who plays the saxophone, a black man who sings on a passing train, and the spirit of the deceased father, who comes down to earth from time to time to explain what's going on.

All this world lives before our eyes, lives and speaks. The characters are all good, their venial defects being only the sympathetic reverse of, or relief from, their profound virtues. They are divided into two categories: those who explain to others how to live, and those who listen to the lesson with profit and gratitude. Life itself, furthermore, is a perpetual lesson that sometimes derives, as in the local primary school, from a vocabulary exercise (as when the little boy learns what it means to be full of fear: "I am afraid, I am afraid"). In fact, there is not an image in the film that does not contain a symbol, not a word that does not aim to teach the viewer what to think of God, death, love, family, culture, art, labor, politics, and war—in other words, how to be a wise man and to experience happiness by fulfilling all of one's duties as a free citizen of the American democratic republic.

The paradox of *The Human Comedy* lies in the fact that, with a systematic, exhaustive degree of precision, propaganda reaches the level of a sort of poetry as each lesson is understood separately and carefully set apart as its own sermon. For a long time this naïve didacticism merely irritates us, but little by little, through repetition, it exhausts our defenses and makes any criticism futile precisely by dint of letting it take

hold. There is nothing to denounce in what obviously does not seek to hide. And although we never cease to be aware of them, all the picture's symbols, all of its sermons, end up organizing themselves into a familiar mythology that soothes us like a song that could well be that of a civilization. (It is no coincidence that the paradisiacal city here is called Ithaca, the boys Ulysses and Homer. For a people at war, of course, the problem of individual survival is most important.) From this cheerful and sporting puritanism, from that temperate and morally-minded humor to be found in populist America, there emerges an enveloping, gentle wisdom, at once courageous and resigned.

But doubtless this form of pedagogy would not reach the level of incantation if the art of the director had not succeeded in transforming it into a visual style. Roger Leenhardt [1903-85], in his first article in *Les Lettres françaises* in 1944, wrote that the novelist was on the verge of becoming the true star of American cinema. Perhaps there is some exaggeration, at least some precipitousness, in this assertion. For in films based on scenarios by William Faulkner, Erskine Caldwell, and John Steinbeck, it is likely that reality will be less "novelistic" and that the outcome will ultimately depend on the quality of the director and the nature of his collaboration with the writer. What *The Human Comedy* already lets us glimpse, however, is an obvious concern for the *mise-en-scène*, for the adaptation of the world of the writer to the style and vision of the screen.

Up to the present, the fidelity of adaptation (when a film was concerned with it) was generally limited to the history and psychology of the characters. At most such fidelity would continue to the point where something called "atmosphere" was achieved. Yet now, apparently, adaptation tends to penetrate further, to attempt to give us a total equivalent, by means of form, setting, and context, of the written novel. This evolution was quite natural from a sociological point of view. Roger Caillois [1913-78] caught a glimpse of it when he pointed out, in *The Sociology of the Novel* [1942], a kind of functional replacement of the novel by the cinema. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note the relatively recent passage from simple sociological equivalence (in the genesis and spread of myths, for example) to strictly artistic equivalence. Already in a

movie like *Jezebel* [1938, William Wyler], which can now be seen again in neighborhood theaters, one can notice the construction by chapter, as it were [*Jezebel* was adapted from the 1933 play of the same name by Owen Davis]: the knowing erasure of an overall artistic style in the service of a typically novelistic psychological analysis and, above all, of an aesthetic duration very clearly related to that of the novel (and not to that of the short story, as in most films).

But the book from which *The Human Comedy* was made itself posed few technical problems. By contrast, we know the place that technique holds among modern American writers. Perhaps, in order to reach the final stage of adaptation, it was necessary that truly cinematographic technique should advance to the point of the prodigious, impersonal flexibility to which the Americans had definitely pushed it. Only this absence of an *a priori* film style could doubtless make possible a total openness to the spirit and form of the novel. In any case, Clarence Brown has not only applied his art here, through the editing, to observing Saroyan's descriptive impressionism, but he has also, through the choice and quality of the actors, through the plasticity of each shot, re-created the aesthetic universe of the novelist.

This powerful ability on Brown's part is not unrelated to the effectiveness of *The Human Comedy* as a work of propaganda, if we can dissociate intellectually its overly visible didacticism from its poetry of images and situations. My analysis is not based solely on the thesis behind the movie, for that thesis is too intimately surrounded by poetry to be able to overwhelm it. It may be impossible for us to purge ourselves of the film's ideas, then, but it is the images above all that obsess us. Indeed, if the sincerity of Saroyan could be questioned (a premise that I do not accept), this would be one of the cleverest scams in the history of the arts—and it is the cinema that has provided us with the evidence. (*Poésie* 45, February 1945)

On *The Great Dictator*: Pastiche and Postiche, or Nothingness for a Moustache

For whoever accords to Charlie in the realm of mythology and aesthetics an importance at least equivalent to that of Hitler in the realm of history and politics; for whoever is no less mystified by the existence of this extraordinary black-and-white creature, whose image has haunted mankind for thirty years, than by that of the man with the extended right arm who still obsesses our generation, *The Great Dictator* [1940] is of inexhaustible significance. Not least because Charlie Chaplin and Adolf Hitler share similarities: they were born almost on the same day in April, in the same year [1889], and under the same conjunction of stars; Chaplin thinks, we are told, that he has missed his vocation and that he should have gone into politics; Chaplin has had a lifelong fascination with Napoleon Bonaparte and in the 1930s started to make a film about him, only to abandon it. (Indeed, the serial killer Henri Désiré Landru [who would inspire the making of *Monsieur Verdoux* (1947)], in addition to Napoleon, has long consumed Chaplin's artistic imagination. Charlie thus may well be something like the hollow relief of his creator: a kind of anti-Chaplin.)

Hitler aside for the moment, two men for half a century have changed the face of the world: King C. Gillette, inventor and industrial promulgator of the mechanical razor, and Charles Chaplin, *auteur* and cinematic popularizer of the Tramp's moustache. I say this without irony, for my subject is too serious, and this phenomenological preamble is indispensable to what will follow.

It is well known that from his first success, the Tramp inspired many imitators, ephemeral plagiarists whose trace is preserved

only in rare histories of the cinema. One of them, though, is not included in the alphabetical index of these works. His fame never ceased to grow; starting from the years 1932-1933, it quickly equaled that of the “little fellow” of *The Gold Rush* [1925]. It might even have surpassed the Tramp’s fame if, on this scale, the magnitudes were still measurable. I am talking about a German political agitator named Hitler. The astonishing thing is that nobody saw through his imposture or at least took it seriously. Charlie, however, was not fooled. He immediately felt a strange sensation above his upper lip, something comparable to the stealthy abduction of one of our tibiae by a fourth-dimensional being in a nature film by Jean Painlevé [1902-89].

I do not, of course, assert that Hitler acted intentionally. It may be that he committed such an imprudent act only under the influence of a sociological ambience and without any personal thought beforehand. But when you are called Adolf Hitler you have to pay attention to your hair and your moustache. Distraction is no more excusable in politics than in mythology. In this instance, however, the former painter committed one of his most egregious errors. In imitating the Tramp, he had begun a real-life swindle that the other guy did not forget. A few years later Hitler had to pay for it. In robbing Charlie of his moustache, Hitler had handed himself over, bound hand and foot, to his victim. The little bit of life he had taken from the lips of the purported Jew would compel him to take on, with profit, even more aspects of his biography—not exactly from Charlie but from an intermediate being, one of pure nothingness.

The dialectic here is subtle yet irrefutable, the strategy invincible. Round one: Hitler reveals his moustache to Chaplin. Round two: Charlie takes back the moustache, but this moustache is no longer just his; it has also become, in the meantime, Hitler’s. In taking it back, Charlie thus possesses a mortgage on the very existence of Adolf Hitler. He brings that existence to life, courtesy of the moustache, yet he can also dispose of it as he pleases.

Out of it, he creates Adenoid Hynkel. Now, what is Hynkel, if not Hitler reduced to his essence and deprived of his existence? Hynkel himself does not exist. He is a puppet in which we recognize Hitler by

his moustache, his size, his hair color, his speechifying, his sentimentality, his cruelty, his anger, and his madness, but he is also an empty conjuncture of meaning, deprived of any ontological justification. In this sense, Hynkel is the ideal purging of Hitler. Chaplin does not kill his opponent through ridiculousness—insofar as he tries to do so, it is true that *The Great Dictator* is lacking—he annihilates him by re-creating before Hitler's, and our, eyes a perfect, absolute, necessary "Dictator," yet one who absolutely frees us of any historical and psychological commitment or involvement. In *reality*, we have freed ourselves from Adolf Hitler through utter contempt and total war, but this liberation implies, in principle, another form of slavery. We are experiencing it at this very moment when we are still plagued by uncertainty about Hitler's death. We shall not get rid of him until we feel ourselves more committed to him, when even hatred has no meaning. Put another way, Hynkel does not inspire us with hatred, pity, anger, or fear, for Hynkel is the nothingness of Hitler. Disposing of his existence, Chaplin in a sense has given it back to him—only to annihilate it.

I have spoken thus far in the absolute. Unfortunately, however, it is not true that Chaplin always succeeds in this transferral of being. To my thinking, he succeeds perfectly only once in *The Great Dictator*, during Charlie's dance with the balloon-like globe of the world. He picks it up during a phonetically mimed speech; but the recollection by us at this point of Hitler at the 1938 Nazi Party rally in Nuremberg is stronger than parody, which thus becomes defused. Indeed, in certain instances Hitler imitated himself with more genius than Chaplin—yet the dictator still retained the matrix of his personality. In Frank Capra's documentary *The Nazis Strike* [1943], for example, Hitler undoubtedly has a more timeless reality, less accidental than that of Hynkel, which is proof that ridicule plays no role here. We laugh at Hitler in Capra's film, but this laughter exorcises neither our fear nor our pain: it does not free us from our feelings.

So I think it's a mistake to say that the weakness of *The Great Dictator* derives from its anachronism, and that we can no longer laugh heartily at a man who has made us suffer so much. It is true that in 1939-

1940, the gags would have seemed funnier to us, yet to the extent that Chaplin missed his shot, that the parody does not transcend ridicule, the film today is still at the level where Hitler can defend his existence against Hynkel's. It is not the comedy that must be contested, then; it is the very source of this comedy and the metaphysical altitude where it is located. It can remain in the arena of historical sentiment: that of caricature, ridicule, or irony; but it can also rise to the Olympus of Graeco-Roman archetypes. As Jupiter metamorphosed into Diana [for the purpose of evading the detection of his wife, Juno], so that he might seduce the nymph Callisto, Chaplin reroutes through Hynkel our belief in Hitler ... for purposes other than seduction.

Such transmutations are possible only in this mythological confusion of appearances and being. The artist is usually a demiurge by original creation—Racine's Phaedra, Molière's Alceste, and Wagner's Siegfried have come definitively to life, and no other god can take them away from us—but the relationship of Charlie to Hynkel is an exceptional phenomenon, perhaps unique in the history of the arts. Chaplin undertook to create in Hynkel a being no less ideal and definitive than the characters of Jean Racine or Jean Giraudoux, a being independent even of the existence of Hitler, one of autonomous necessity. In theory, Hynkel could exist without Hitler, since he was born from Charlie, yet only Hitler could enable Hynkel to thrive on all the movie screens of the world. It is he who becomes the accidental, contingent being, alienated, to tell the truth about an existence nourished by another—without, however, owing it to Hitler and whom Hynkel obliterates in the very act of assimilating his being.

This ontological burglary rests ultimately on the theft of the moustache. Consider that *The Great Dictator* would have been impossible if Hitler had been hairless or had grown a moustache like Clark Gable's. All of Chaplin's art would have been futile since Chaplin, without his moustache, is no longer Charlie, and Hynkel had to proceed from Charlie as well as from Hitler, such that it was a case of both at once and both come to nothing. And it is the precise interaction of the two myths that extinguishes them both. Benito Mussolini himself is not annulled by Benzino Napaloni of *The Great Dictator*; he is only

caricatured, and, anyway, he has little existence to be destroyed through ridicule. (I find that since his actual death in April of this year, Mussolini resists his double much better, as if the fate of having his dead body hanged by the feet had conferred new life on him.) The case of Hynkel is different, for it rests on the magical properties of this pilose conceit. He would have been inconceivable if Hitler had not first committed the impudence of resembling the Tramp by adopting his moustache.

Finally, it is not the talent of a mime, or even the genius of Chaplin, that permitted him to create *The Great Dictator*. It was nothing but that moustache. The Tramp waited for the right moment, did what he had to do, then escaped for all eternity with his facial hair intact. (In an early scene in *The Great Dictator*, the anonymous Jewish barber played by Chaplin returns home and, having discovered his resemblance to Hynkel, *shaves off* his moustache.) As for the power of the myth, let us recall that Hitler's own moustache was real. (*L'Esprit*, November 1945)

The Magnificent Ambersons: A Drama of Pride, the Drama of Orson Welles

Orson Welles is definitely one of the five or six directors in global cinema worthy of the title of *auteur*—that is, one of the few filmmakers who carry within themselves a vision of the world. It happens most often that these men are total authors: authors of the script, authors of the *mise-en-scène*. It also happens—as in the case of John Ford—that they succeed, through the scenarios of others, in creating their own artistic universe. Such is not the case here, however. For Welles, one of the five or six international *auteurs*, belongs to the first category: that of screenwriter-directors. This is what we must call attention to first, I believe, in any preface to an analysis of *The Magnificent Ambersons* [1942].

One undoubtedly thinks of Erich von Stroheim first when the name of Orson Welles comes up. Like those of Stroheim, Welles's films are the expression of an extremely powerful personality, but one that may have only one thing to say. *Greed* [1924], for example, is a prodigious aesthetic psychoanalysis of the sexual complexes of Stroheim himself; *Citizen Kane* [1941] and *The Magnificent Ambersons*, for their part, are assertions of Welles's own will to power. The first case, if I may say so, is a Freudian one; the second, Jungian. And since we happen to be invoking the twin priests of psychoanalysis, it is important to emphasize as well the theme of eternal childhood in Welles—a theme that carries the plots of his two movies to date and to which can be joined, in *Kane* as in *Ambersons*, a sled- and snow-complex. Let us not forget, moreover, that snow is the childlike motif *par excellence*. For some snowmen and snowballs of the past few decades, read Jean

Cocteau's novel *Les Enfants terribles* [*The Holy Terrors*, 1929] or see his film *The Blood of a Poet* [1932].

I would also like to bring up the following quasi-magical expressions, something like passwords, from Orson Welles's pictures: "Rosebud" in *Citizen Kane*; "You're not wanted in this house, Mr. Morgan," and "George Amberson Minafer had got his comeuppance," both from *The Magnificent Ambersons*, and both conveying more or less the same meaning or sense of inevitability. Everything does in Welles, you could say: for his work is replete with fateful autobiography. In short, Charles Foster Kane and the main character of *Ambersons*, George—embodied by Tim Holt, who, like Welles himself, is the curious product of osmosis between character and actor—are two beings possessed of the same pride, that of Welles himself. The pride of a man in love (poor Rita Hayworth, who is married to Welles! [1943–47]), the pride of a man in conflict with society, the collapse in solitude of the prideful individual's world and his final impotence: these are Welles's subjects, and, without question, he himself will face a similar drama in forty years or so,

At this point it is necessary to stress a crucial difference between the two characters who embody Orson Welles's drama, the difference between doing and being: Kane is moved by action, business, by the instinct for dominance in the eyes of the world; George is content to be Amberson the Magnificent, a spoiled only child, upper-class yet manly, yet who prefers yachting to commerce, and who turns his contempt on the future and the invention of the "ridiculous" automobile. Nevertheless, we should not neglect the social drama in *The Magnificent Ambersons*, which is no less important than in *Citizen Kane*. The problems here concerning the relations of men are not really more serious ones than those raised by *Kane* (indeed, these problems fade in importance in the course of the later film), but the role of social context in *Ambersons* is essential to the very structure of its narrative.

From the end of the nineteenth century to the years preceding the First World War, the decadence of a generation of American quasi-aristocrats, of a family that is pre-Masonic in more than one respect, produced a second generation born to a new, different kind of

prosperity. With the automobile, the industrial metropolis develops, a place where the magnificent Ambersons will no longer have a primary role or any place at all, even an anonymous one. These aspects of the movie are certainly engaging, but they would not suffice to give it and Orson Welles a place apart in the American cinema. I believe that the most original contribution of *The Magnificent Ambersons* lies in its use of cinematographic means, unusual for today, for the purpose of producing a genuine revolution in narrative storytelling. I am talking about the film's dramatic editing and visual continuity.

In *Citizen Kane*, one especially noticed the dislocation of time and the use of flashbacks, a method of narration already used in the novel and sometimes in the cinema. Yet the story of the Ambersons, which takes place according to a straightforward chronology, is basically of the same nature as that of Charles Foster Kane. The principle behind Welles's originality in *The Magnificent Ambersons*, however, lies in his way of depicting reality, of presenting the very material of his narrative. To wit: instead of analyzing a scene with the camera, of introducing into the heart of reality a series of conventional points of view that cut it up into small, clear, and logical pieces, Orson Welles endeavors to restore for us a series of historical plaques or tableaux in their entirety. The motif of the *Kane* puzzle is found only in the background of *Ambersons*; simply put, the pieces are given to us this time. But each scene in the new picture delivers a multi-planed cinematic punch, and it is to just such a concern for realism that the technique employed by Welles responds.

Thanks to depth-of-field shooting, all the characters participate in the action, and all of the décor, including the ceiling, enriches them by its very presence. In *The Magnificent Ambersons*, the interior architecture of the Amberson house seems to be constantly and entirely on screen; the same goes for the street that one otherwise sees only several times during the film, either directly or through its reflection in the windows of shops. The concern not to crack this particular dramatic crystal leads Orson Welles to break the Hollywood habit of "classical" cutting by using long, static takes of dizzying length (the scene inside the kitchen between Aunt Fanny and George in dialogue, for example), but it would be easy to show that lengthy tracking shots have the same

concern to follow an event in all its sequential development. It is always less the movements of the camera that serve the narrative here than the placement of the actors and the play of light on the set.

I should note that the cinematographer is not Gregg Toland, which proves that the continuity of style between *Citizen Kane* and *The Magnificent Ambersons* is entirely attributable to the director. As for the acting, about which one can do nothing except marvel, I believe that its extraordinary intensity derives from the fact that the equal sharpness of all the frame's visual fields requires that the actors in any one scene continue to perform with total realism, even when they move to a subsidiary dramatic plane: the weight of the whole scene is thus enhanced not solely by the proper dramatic "play" between each of the planes of action, but also by the power of suggestion on the part of the other performers (and of the décor). In the process, their presence seems to take on an additional density. In one scene where, during a long walk with George Minafer, Lucy never ceases to confront him with the same frozen smile, Anne Baxter's acting itself seems particularly intense. This actress's importance is not theatrical, though, precisely because her character is treated as especially significant only insofar as it is an integral part of the film's reality. Hence, also, the astonishing realism of voices in *Ambersons*, as they never sacrifice their value as sheer sound or noise (Aunt Fanny's hysterical rants, for instance) in the context of the movie's dialogue.

After the neorealistic revolution of *Citizen Kane's* cinematographic achievement, then, *The Magnificent Ambersons* becomes the consecration, in some sort of stripped-down and ultimately classical way, of a new mode of screen narration. (*L'Écran français*, November 19, 1946)

The Lost Weekend: The Drama of Alcohol

The Lost Weekend [1945, Billy Wilder] has arrived from America preceded by a glowing reputation. To speak frankly, that this film had already collected four “Oscars” (awards granted by Hollywood’s Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences) did not seem to prove much: we French know from experience that these prizes often reflect values that are more commercial than artistic. But, this time, we were wrong to be skeptical: *The Lost Weekend* definitely deserved the Academy Award for Best Picture of 1945. Ray Milland, Charles Brackett, and Billy Wilder also certainly deserved their awards, respectively, for Best Actor, Best Adapted Screenplay, and Best Director.

Alcoholism—the subject of this movie—has cinematic precedents, let alone literary ones. Early in the twentieth century, Ferdinand Zecca [1864-1947] had noticed the dramatic possibilities of the “misfortunes” of heavy drinking [in the short films *Alcohol and Its Victims* (1902, based on the 1877 novel *The Drinking Den*, by Émile Zola) and *Alcoholism Leads to Tuberculosis* (1905)]. By now, the drunk is a character of social tragicomedy that’s as popular as the cuckold. As with the cuckold’s woes, audiences generally prefer to laugh at those of the drunkard, if not laugh and cry at the same time, as in the case of the celebrated drunkenness of Raimu [a.k.a. Jules Auguste Muraire, 1883-1946], playing the part of Aimable Castanier, in *The Baker’s Wife* [1938, Marcel Pagnol].

The originality of *The Lost Weekend* is that it takes alcoholism seriously, almost tragically. We do not want to laugh at Don Birnam, a young writer who may have a promising future, as his passion for whiskey gradually degrades him despite the patient efforts of his fiancée and his younger brother. For the protagonist of this adventure retains

enough consciousness, enough moral and aesthetic sense, to measure his own fall. His cowardice in the face of alcohol—which will land him one evening in the alcoholics' ward of a hospital, which will drive him to pay with a kiss the bill of a few dollars demanded from him by a barmaid, or which will lead him another time to try to steal money from a woman's purse to pay his bar tab, and then to hock the fur coat of his fiancée to a pawnbroker—nonetheless fails to make him an irremediably ignoble creature. Birnam still preserves some vestige of an almost aristocratic appeal that requires our compassion and pity. (In truth, the scenario of *The Lost Weekend* seems a little lame with its incredible "happy ending," in which Billy Wilder basically begs us not to believe and of which Will Hays, sponsor of the Motion Picture Production Code [1930-68], appears to be the godfather!)

The difficulty of the leading role resides in the subtlety, even ambiguity, of the figure that Ray Milland so admirably embodies. It is rare to witness such an identification of the actor and his character. A Cary Grant or a Gary Cooper in America, a Jean Gabin in France, always more or less absorbs the character he plays into his star persona. But because we know little of Ray Milland at this point, it is not possible to say whether he is really like Don Birnam, whether Don Birnam is like him, or if there is no resemblance between the two at all. Commanding the screen uninterrupted for nearly two hours, Milland manages to sustain with consistent probability a role of acrobatic difficulty, so much so that the viewer experiences the chimerical impression of familiarity with an actor he otherwise does not know. This, you see, is no drunk who just comes out of a room staggering ...

The Lost Weekend is above all a cinematic *tour de force*, however, a work of technical and artistic prowess. Billy Wilder obviously sought out the difficulty of adapting for the screen a novel of character analysis and introspection. Charles Jackson's 1944 book of the same name, which the movie made famous in the United States and which the French publisher had the astute courtesy to distribute to all Parisian film critics fifteen days before the release of the picture, is a rather skillful work—particularly the more anti-cinematic it becomes in both its clinical observation and its use of internal monologue. The action,

entirely psychological, coincides exactly with what happens in the head, muscles, nerves, and guts of the hero. If it were still necessary, we would have with *The Lost Weekend* striking proof that the cinema's power of psychological analysis is not inferior to that of literature. It was only through a superficial and hasty digestion of film technique on the part of aesthetics that we felt compelled to link the objectivity of the camera with a certain artistic "behaviorism," and thereby limit the medium's psychological possibilities to the external observation of characters' behavior.

I will go further. Billy Wilder not only succeeded in preserving almost entirely the contents of Jackson's book: he has also enriched his source. Everything is there, and something else, too. In order to make us understand what is going on inside his protagonist, without resorting to the coarse technique of the superimposition-cum-dissolve to show imagined or hallucinated actions, the director employs no other resource than the acting of the lead actor; and the point of view, skillfully coordinated, of the camera makes it possible to deduce his feelings as if we were using a radio-direction finder to locate the position of an invisible transmitter. Thus, in the tremendous scene at the bar, where Don Birnam rifles through the handbag of a female customer to get money to pay for his drinks, the smallest nuance, first of his decision to do this, then of his shame at having done so—a shame both apathetic and desperate—does not escape us.

We blush with him. But in the play of mirrors by which Billy Wilder has succeeded in revealing Don Birnam's feelings to us, he had to resort for assistance to the décor: to the ornaments of the bar and to the other drinkers. And the need for the director to reveal the inner world through its echo in the external world permits him to add one to the other. Thus the psychological study of Jackson's novel becomes an astonishing social document, as well, in which the physical presence of New York—its streets, its rooms, its bars, its booze, its pawn shops, its hospital corridors—is all the more precise and intense because it is part of the analysis of the main character. The glass of whiskey, the damp circles it leaves on the counter, Birnam's typewriter, and a hundred other objects that also inhabit the spirit of the protagonist, confer upon

the film a hallucinatory importance that these things do not have in the novel—and that therefore the novel itself does not have.

I still have to speak of the picture's visual realization, particularly of the estimable and icy skill of its editing. Billy Wilder's *Double Indemnity* [1944] had already revealed the fundamental purity of his cinematic language. In *The Lost Weekend*, however, the simplicity of Wilder's style reaches the perfection of the invisible. Is it necessary to add, under the circumstances, that the awarding of the Oscar to *The Lost Weekend* for best American film of the year requires no further comment? (*L'Écran français*, February 18, 1947)

The Best Years of Our Lives and the American Social-Problem Picture

We French critics know, and we repeat it often enough, that American film production is increasingly oblivious to social reality. Five or six festivals seem to have confirmed the fact that conventional, and more and more frequently artificial, Hollywood moviemaking contrasts with what can broadly be called European realism (brilliantly represented these days by Italy). Yet I am not sure that there isn't at times some intellectual naïveté, if not aesthetic bad faith, in condemning Hollywood on the basis of this single tendency. Both untruthfulness and artifice are at the heart of more than one masterpiece, and there are enough examples of films whose critical intentions, whose overzealous desire to achieve social realism, disserve the cinema as much as they serve it. But it is probably fair, amidst the ongoing downturn in the number of American pictures with some sociopolitical substance, to diagnose a massive hemorrhaging of reality.

Those who have dollars for red blood cells and whose hemoglobin comes in Technicolor may not immediately realize the obvious: that the artistic voltage curve is not always parallel to the receipt graphs from the M.P.A.A. [Motion Picture Association of America]. Yet, more or less consciously, some producers and directors seem to have understood the causes of this creative malignancy, this imaginative anemia. Just as the documentary prepared the way for the current revival of both the British and Italian cinemas, it is the *March of Time* series [1935-51], an intermediate form between documentary and the contemporary newsreel, that now, in the postwar period, is inspiring the social neorealism of American cinema.

Under the impetus of the producer Louis de Rochemont [1899-1978], the creator of the monthly *March of Time* series, Henry Hathaway shot two, not-too-convincing World War II spy films: *The House on 92nd Street* [1945] and *13 Rue Madeleine* [1947]. But the same causes have produced better effects under the direction of Elia Kazan, in Rochemont's most recent production: *Boomerang* [1947], which was applauded this year at the Cannes Festival. These movies are all basically only a new form of documentary, reconstituted and romanticized for the needs of the feature film. Their scenarios, on the whole, are faithful to real events. Thus *Boomerang* reports in every detail how the stubborn honesty of a public prosecutor narrowly avoids a miscarriage of justice, in spite of the conflicting interests of local politicians. To the evident social appeal of such subjects, drawn from current events, is added a very special technical one, as the pictures in question are shot on location and almost always where the historical event took place: no more studios. For Hollywood, this is a revolution that really counts. In *Boomerang*, moreover, we are not even sure that the revolver depicted was *not* the one actually used to commit the crime of murder.

The cinema was not waiting for another instance of fictionalized documentary, however, in order to discover the psychological and moral tragedy of the postwar period: this was already the subject of *Three Comrades* [1938, Frank Borzage] *vis-à-vis* World War I. Yet this is exactly what we got in *The Best Years of Our Lives* [1946, William Wyler]. Since America has never really experienced such a tragedy in the flesh—and in the blood—it is no longer just a topic for a novel from which an exciting scenario can later be adapted; this is a problem that afflicts the United States now, for the first time, and which must be quickly solved, perhaps with the help of the cinema. It may be more serious there than in any other country in the world, because the American soldier was totally cut off for four years from his native land: the U.S. military, you see, did not grant any home-leave. America has therefore devoted enormous sums to rehabilitating or caring for its ex-soldiers who are now physically disabled or mentally disturbed. G.I.s have multiple medical facilities to reintegrate them as efficiently as possible into normal civilian life. Still, these measures obviously cannot

solve all the material and ethical aspects of a problem that remains essentially spiritual as well as human.

Without limiting itself to the documentary fixation of Louis de Rochemont, *The Best Years of Our Lives* nevertheless operates in the same social and realistic realm. The scenario has been carefully constructed to show typical cases and dramatic situations of an exemplary likelihood. It has even been profoundly modified to suit the character played by Harold Russell—a sailor who lost both hands as a result of burns suffered when his ship was sunk, and who now uses prosthetic hooks. Russell somehow interprets his own private life in the movie, for while he was training for the U.S. Army in 1944, a defective fuse detonated an explosive he was handling. As a result, he lost both hands—and was given the mechanical hooks we see in *The Best Years of Our Lives*. After his recovery, Russell was featured in an Army documentary called *Diary of a Sergeant* (1945, Joseph M. Newman) about rehabilitating war veterans—a film seen by William Wyler, who decided to cast him in his upcoming picture alongside Fredric March and Dana Andrews.

I must confess, though, that I am not entirely convinced of the artistic excellence of this return to realism in forms derived from *The March of Time*. Even *The Best Years of Our Lives*, which is already a long way from Rochemont's newsreels, does not always avoid a certain didactic tendentiousness. The problem is that the pursuit of truth through social preoccupation and psychological honesty is a moral quality rather than an aesthetic value. And Hollywood has so lost its sense of reality that it hopes, a little naïvely, to find it through formal, material concerns: the authentic set, the actual gun used in the real crime, the genuinely amputated hands of the former serviceman. Yes, the truth of art can pass through these things, but it cannot stop there. Hollywood may not yet be prepared, however, for discipline of such a kind; and it is perhaps only by following the Ariadnian thread of its lost sense of reality that American cinema will come to the end of the labyrinth of artifice, where it has gone astray. Provided, that is, that it actually comes *out* of the labyrinth and does not confuse real life with a mere blood transfusion.

Nonetheless, these reservations are not intended to diminish the eminent merits of *The Best Years of Our Lives*, in which the mastery of one of the world's great directors is ever on display. The desire for realism joins here with the natural taste of Wyler for extreme sobriety in the *mise-en-scène*, which always endeavors to place emphasis on the actor above all else. Indeed, the depth of field systematically used by the cinematographer Gregg Toland finds here a double justification. It serves the realistic bias of the *mise-en-scène* by constantly highlighting the performers in the totality of the décor, and it allows for less cutting through the alignment of the actors in long takes shot in deep focus. One could hardly attain a surer sense of dramatic expression with a greater paucity of cinematic means. When it thus determines its own technique, realism actually passes from moral virtue to aesthetic value. The issue is not so much to speak the truth (which teachers, heads of state, and priests can do as well as directors) as to create a *style* of truth. For in art, it is ultimately through style that one can also lie: realism is thus as much a matter of form as of substance.

Yet no matter how great my admiration for William Wyler's mastery, I cannot help concluding that *The Best Years of Our Lives* may have been more burdened than blessed by the quasi-documentary scruples of its director. I finally prefer, on the basis of its theme—socially burning and no less topical—*Crossfire* [1947, Edward Dmytryk], recently presented at Cannes [where it won the award for “Best Social Film”] along with *Boomerang*. Except for the little sermon on anti-Semitism by the police officer in this film, Dmytryk in the end treats the same subject as Wyler, probably with less scope but with much more naturalness. Without leaving the studio, in the perfectly artificial atmosphere of constructed sets—a bar, a movie theater, or a hotel room—he knew that, just through the truth of the situations, the dialogue, and the acting, he could create the tragedy of demobilization.

In the sense of filmic art penetrated with social reality, then, *Crossfire* may be a work of lesser scope than Wyler's *Best Years of Our Lives*, but it gets much closer to its goal. Here, art and reality never appear to be two dogs glaring at each other. The documentary element is totally assimilated, and the scenario develops according to its aesthetic

needs without one's ever feeling that Dmytryk needed to be true ... just to be sure of being true. (*L'Écran français*, October 7, 1947)

About *Crossfire*

My dear Georges Altman, your arguments are so troubling, so disturbing, that I initially hesitated to turn this into a controversy. [Altman (1901-60) had written negatively of *Crossfire* in an earlier issue of *L'Écran français*.] But I believe, on reflection, that it is not right to let *Crossfire* [1947, Edward Dmytryk] suffer the blow of such an injustice, and I also do not wish your views to go unchallenged in these pages.

Truth be told, you are *very* unjust. For you attack the movie almost exclusively where it is vulnerable: its indictment of anti-Semitism, which seems insufficient. Yet what work could hope to fully encompass the horror and magnitude of the Holocaust? *The Last Chance* [1945, Leopold Lindtberg]? Okay, although this masterpiece of masterpieces is almost the sole one you can cite for me. But is it not unfair (and you have foreseen the following argument yourself) to hold up a European film—realized at the very heart of the massacre of Israel, as it were—to an American picture dealing with the Jewish problem in America for Americans? Not only is your argument weak, but it is also mistaken, for you presume to know what *could* be said, even what *ought* to be said, in the U.S. about such a subject. Yet it may well be that *Crossfire* does more there for the Jewish cause than *The Last Chance* did in Europe.

You then perfidiously administer the deathblow—*in cauda venenum* [the poison in the tail]—by evoking the black problem, unfortunately absent from the picture. You quote Richard Wright's *Native Son* [1940] in support of your argument, but this is a literary reference that I am obliged to reject. You know very well that the American novel and theater can deal with the black question quite freely because they have an eager, abundant audience in the northern United

States, and, in the case of a play-in-performance, the only city of note there is New York. No producer, though, would be crazy enough to underwrite a film banned in advance in half of America. The screenwriters in this case did what they had to do with the racial question. It seems obvious to me that if blacks do not play a role in *Crossfire*, it is not through any desire to exclude them from the equation, but through benign ellipsis.

I will grant you, however, that it is in this area where Edward Dmytryk's film is least able to defend itself. Nonetheless, was the idea here to make an anti-bigotry statement? The real subject is the G.I.: the disfavor met by the returning soldier, the American social sickness of which he was the victim during the postwar period. Of this I am sure. Indeed, artistically speaking, *Crossfire* is a far more valuable work than *The Best Years of Our Lives* [1946, William Wyler]. Let me be clear: Wyler's film, it's true, has an infinitely wider documentary scope, but it is a sort of civic epic in which the writers have identified for exploitation the maximum number of exemplary situations or instructive moments. There is no question of quantitatively comparing this species of civics lesson with a police thriller that can hardly, according to the laws of the genre, be expected to treat a swath of subjects. (That is what Henri-Georges Clouzot tries to do in *Jenny Lamour* [1947].)

I insist on maintaining, then, that despite *Crossfire*'s oblique angle of incidence and the narrowness of its field of attack, Dmytryk goes deeper into the subject of the repatriated serviceman than William Wyler. Moreover, *Crossfire*'s realism is aesthetically much more convincing than the realism of *The Best Years of Our Lives*, because it is art and not pedagogy. Perhaps *Crossfire* does not give us enough information to constitute a monograph on demobilization in the United States, but from a brief flash of this film's magnesium I get a more tragic sense of the moral situation of the G.I. in postwar America than from all of Wyler's nitrate.

It is appropriate here to speak of *Crossfire*'s production design, to which you dedicate merely eight lines and which you cleverly do not deign to discuss until the end, in order to diminish its formal qualities. Dmytryk made his film in just twenty-four days, with an obvious dearth

of means: very few sets were used, and they are mostly partial and uncommonly modest. Only four play any real dramatic role: the corner of a bar; three seats in a movie theater and the last row of the theater's balcony; a ladies' room in a restaurant with a curtain to hide it from the kitchen; the police officer's workroom (as drab as possible). Let me add to this list a few quick glimpses of a furnished room and of some soldier's house. To be sure, I find it hard to gather, from such a small number of delimited settings, as much information about American life as can be deciphered from the scenery and locations in *The Best Years of Our Lives*. At least I know from *Crossfire*, though, what Wyler has *not* shown us: I know the manner in which people go to the cinema in the United States and up to what time; I know how the hotel rooms look; and I saw a kitchen without a refrigerator but with a gas stove where, when the warmed milk overflows, it leaves the same mess as in my home (if I had milk).

It is in such a world—with a dramatic density all the stronger because its extreme understatement does not attract attention to documentary details—that an action takes place of an extraordinarily pure line yet one no less charged with weight. Everything in *Crossfire* happens in a single night, among a few men who have not yet slept off the army or the whiskey. In this no-man's-land of a setting, of a radiating social swamp, ex-G.I.s living in a requisitioned hotel continue to be vaguely maintained by the government. Are they waiting for something? Work, a train, an apartment? The strength, instead, to reunite with their wives, their friends, with human existence? Are they waiting to get back the sense of civilian life that the war took from them? These men wander at night in the bars and get drunk until one of them, embittered to half-madness, kills a Jew who is not right in the head. At dawn, we finally get to exit this stinking story of alcohol and tobacco, and the fresh air of daylight restores to us the hope of life. But some heads are still heavy with bad whiskey and especially with another, far healthier hangover: that of war.

Should I insist now on Dmytryk's admirable direction of the actors? There is the nonchalant yet precise playing of Robert Mitchum as Sergeant Keeley, or, in the role of the police investigator, the

performance of Robert Young, whom we had all but forgotten. How many films have we seen produced in the last three years that have such a unity of style? At most only those of Billy Wilder! How much more praise, I ask you, my dear Altman, must I heap on *Crossfire*, which gives us the impression of seeking out, if not American life as a whole, then at least certain painful and secret areas of a wounded civilization? These images stick to this sick world like a piece of gum chewed to the point of despair. (*L'Écran français*, November 18, 1947)

It's a Wonderful Life: Time to Condemn Capra?

Considering the distaste with which Frank Capra's last two films to reach France (*Meet John Doe* [1941] and the one under discussion here, *It's a Wonderful Life* [1946]) leave me, I feel obligated to mention that I have some qualms about writing this review. Optimism at any price, social moralizing, and implicit apologies for the American democratic man, which are at the heart of every Capra picture—more so, it seems, since Robert Riskin [1897-1955] stopped being his screenwriter—all of these can understandably injure our European sensibilities. It displeases me to see the solution of individual morality routinely substituted, in Capra's *oeuvre*, for the criticism of societal institutions, and with a skill that is all the more irritating for never failing. His social satire never challenges establishment practices, despite appearances. There is no need here for communism, fascism, socialism, or any other "ism": after all, Lionel Barrymore of *You Can't Take It with You* [1938, Frank Capra] can make the misdeeds of any big bank go away simply by organizing evening harmonica lessons for the kings of finance.

Maybe we don't have the right to judge and condemn Capra in this matter, first of all because his sincerity is so obvious that it would be silly to see in it a kind of reactionary Machiavellianism. Capra's optimism and the sentimentality surrounding his work undoubtedly have deep roots in the American social psyche. Didn't the author of *The Marriage of Figaro* [1784, Pierre Beaumarchais], in his preface to a terrible sentimental comedy [*Julie* (1769)] of which he is also the author (and not Vivant Denon, a fact that is often ignored), make his own apology for tears, which possess the wonderful ability to make the

spectator more virtuous? Insofar as the cinema itself is a reflection of an era and an audience, it is not worthwhile to reproach any movie *a priori* for reflecting an image different from our own, even if we find ourselves more beautiful. At least we must first judge the book, not by its cover or contents, but by its country and chronology. We may not like baked beans, let us say, but we should not be so fatuous as to automatically ascribe to them an essence inferior to that of fried potatoes.

These rhetorical precautions taken—which are the maximum concession that my critical consciousness can allow Capra’s latest film without watching the ink in my pen dry up, and with the hope that this effort at objectivity will contribute more effectively to my salvation than the spectacle of *It’s a Wonderful Life*—I shall relegate all the “defects” of the director of *Lost Horizon* [1937] to the realm of sociological curiosity and remain content, instead, with judging their artistic implementation in the work itself.

Fortunately, *It’s a Wonderful Life* is far superior to *Meet John Doe*, that intolerable evangelical sermon. Nonetheless, it follows in the same line as it demonstrates that one can always be a happy man and that life, despite occasional appearances, is never futile. George Bailey (James Stewart) had dreamed of exploring the world and becoming a great engineer, but a diabolical destiny arranges to defeat all his aspirations. He is asked to continue directing his late father’s building-and-loan association: a kind of real-estate collective that allows workers to become owners of their homes and thereby escape the clutches of the evil financier Henry F. Potter (Lionel Barrymore), who terrorizes the city of Bedford Falls by systematically buying up almost everything that brings in any money. Farewell, for George, to distant islands and advanced studies. Then one day, on their way to their honeymoon, he and his bride witness a run on the Bailey Building-and-Loan and must use all their savings to lend emergency financial support until the association can survive the Depression and reopen—thwarting the plans of the nefarious Potter for a takeover. Year after year, George is gradually able to consolidate the position of the Building-and-Loan, despite blackmail or extortion efforts on the part of the calculating financier. Pretty little houses thus grow like mushrooms in Bedford Falls, and the

city slums begin slowly to disappear.

One day, though, the scatterbrained, distracted Uncle Billy (Thomas Mitchell) loses the \$8,000 that he had gone to deposit in the local bank on behalf of the Building-and-Loan. The loss of the money means total bankruptcy and perhaps prison for George Bailey, but it especially means that Potter will have crushed him. This is too much for George, and our man is thinking of suicide. It is then that heaven intervenes in the person of a courteous and good-natured angel named Clarence (Henry Travers), who easily demonstrates to Bailey that in fact he has succeeded in his life, not failed. What follows are the ten best minutes of the film, the only brilliantly original sequence in the scenario. By heavenly grace, the hero will now know what his world would be like if he had not existed: his mother takes him for a disturbing visitor; his wife is an old maid, a librarian with wire-rimmed glasses who runs away as George approaches, as if he were a satyr; his brother Harry, a hero of the Second War, drowns at the age of nine in an accident from which George had otherwise saved him; and his humble friends continue to live miserably in the slums of a place now called Pottersville. These examples suffice to prove to George Bailey that, though he believed his life was not worth living, he has succeeded far more than many others—in touching the lives of his fellow human beings. This specious demonstration at least has the merit of proceeding from a specifically cinematographic, or fantastic, idea in the script, and one would have liked to see it extend for more than one reel.

For the rest, Capra remained true to classical Hollywood narrative, conceived and directed here, it is true, with almost hallucinatory skill. The scenes of tenderness are capable of penetrating the armor of even the most skeptical critical mind. They pull you into a real emotional maelstrom—so much so that you have to cling to your handkerchief in an attempt to remain clear-headed amidst this vertigo of goodness and light. James Stewart dominates these scenes, and the entire film, with mesmerizing ease; and the slight deafness with which Capra has endowed him only adds to his charm. Lionel Barrymore, for his part, has found a way to revitalize his wheelchair number [in real life, Barrymore was confined to a wheelchair from 1938 until the end of life]

by embodying, for once, a bad guy. All the secondary performances in *It's a Wonderful Life* are naturally excellent.

I should note that this picture was produced by the short-lived “Liberty Films” [1945-51], which was an attempt at independent production resulting from the association, after the war, of the directors Frank Capra, William Wyler, and George Stevens. (*L'Écran français*, August 3, 1948)

Fourteen Hours: Myth Has Disappeared Around the Corner

A desperate man is perched on the narrow ledge outside his room on the fifteenth floor of a New York hotel, hesitating for fourteen hours before throwing himself into the void. All the while, an immense crowd has been waiting below on the avenue, together with the radio, television, and newspaper reporters who have gathered to cover this sensational event.

If a screenwriter had had such an idea, no producer would have agreed to shoot the script despite the fact that the event had occurred in reality. [The movie under review here, *Fourteen Hours* (1951, Henry Hathaway), was based on the suicide of John William Warde, a twenty-six-year-old-year-old man who jumped from the seventeenth floor of the Gotham Hotel in New York City on July 26, 1938, after standing for eleven hours on a window ledge.] Scandalous or peculiar situations like this occur all the time in real life—the only question, of course, is which of them get filmed and which do not.

The playwright Jean Racine himself made a pertinent statement in one of his prefaces on the authenticity of recorded history, something like: The internal probability of a dramatic action is based on the external believability of a similar objective or factual event. In Jean Renoir's *The Rules of the Game* [1939], for instance, the Marquis de la Chesnaye tells his wife's lover, with whom he has just exchanged a few blows, "From time to time I read in the newspapers that, say, an Italian worker wanted to steal away the wife of a Polish miner, and that the whole affair ended with knife wounds to both men. I did not believe

these things possible. Well, they are, my dear sir, they are!" The extrinsic authority evoked by the Marquis (played by Marcel Dalio) is precisely the kind that served as the basis for the scenario of Renoir's own *Toni* [1935].

Moreover, right now, two different films [*Rome, Eleven O'Clock* (1952, Giuseppe De Santis); *Three Forbidden Tales* (1952, Augusto Genina)] are being made in Italy about another true story: on January 15, 1951, on Via Savoia in Rome, eighty young women were killed or injured in the collapse of the staircase on which they, along with 120 other job applicants, were waiting for an interview. Perhaps the *fact*, a typically modern reality born of the plethora of information provided by the news media, renews the tragic idea in a realistic sense—and realism's affinities with the cinema are self-evident. Yet the excess of the classical tragic action, its legendary enormity, which made it a matter only for gods, kings, or generals, has now metamorphosed into the dailiness of plebeian reality, into one or another of the many facts that overwhelm us. Myth itself disappeared around the corner.

The exceptional nature of the potential suicide in the American film *Fourteen Hours*—a suicide that, to an abhorrent degree, exteriorizes the elements of freedom and choice in their most extreme form—was in its own paradoxical way an excellent subject, rich with dramatic possibilities. That "nothing happens" by way of choice during these fourteen hours is not an admissible objection: on the contrary. The dramatic effect arises here from a growing, vertiginous tension that is entirely sufficient to communicate itself to the audience. Jean-Paul Sartre defines such vertigo as the existential sensation *par excellence*: consciousness of the pure freedom to choose the abyss over life. Hence I cannot imagine a form of suicide more charged with meaning, more likely to arouse in the mind of the viewer (on the street or in the movie theater) a fundamental understanding of existential crisis, than the one depicted in this picture.

Furthermore, it would be hard to imagine a better conjunction of individual exploit and social consequence than we find in *Fourteen Hours*. Around this despairing man, from morning to night, all the attention of a street, a district, a city, a nation has time to coagulate, little

by little. The whole police force is on its toes, in a formidable moral and physical mobilization that is premised not on the life or death of an unknown being, but on his individual liberty. To be sure, every day, every hour men kill or kill themselves, yet they do not give us time to notice or intervene. We do not know about their actions until after “it is too late.” In short, such a topic is too multifaceted to be exhausted in a single film. And Henry Hathaway, the director here, by no means even comes close to exhausting it. Like his protagonist, he seems embarrassed by the need to choose.

Hathaway is a skilled practitioner who has given various cinematic evidence of his skill, as he is the director of both *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer* [1935] and *Peter Ibbetson* [1935]. It is true that he is also the fabricator of a number of commercial products of lesser originality—movies to which he applies, rather willingly, an adulterated form of neorealism (*13 Rue Madeleine* [1947], for one). What he does in *Fourteen Hours* is perhaps quite spectacular, but it all unfolds with too calculated an ease to qualify as a valid treatment of the subject. First of all, and this is the least serious item, Hathaway has completely neglected the sociological aspect of the event, even if he describes its surface quite well (the gradual mobilization of the police; the mounting numbers of journalists in attendance, with their microphones, cameras, and notebooks in tow; the increasing size of the crowd; etc.): that is, the director ignores the profound significance of morbid curiosity—bordering-on-sadism that surrounds such a societal phenomenon. One need only compare, from this particular angle, the crowd of onlookers in *Fourteen Hours* with the spectators of the boxing match in *The Set-Up* [1949, Robert Wise] to understand what I’m talking about. All that Hathaway can find to show us is the edifying reconciliation of a wife with her husband—a wife impressed by the possible ethical consequences of divorce on the minds of her sensitive children, just as she has been impressed by the tragic drama of suicide unfolding before her eyes as she sits in a nearby law office.

As you can imagine, these fourteen hours of anticipation could not be served better, from the point of view of American cinema, than by a psychoanalysis of the hero. Under the technical supervision of two

psychiatrists, a brave police officer, to whom the “patient” responds positively, tries to make him speak in order to shed light on his “problem.” Ah, now we cannot say that we are witnessing a metaphysical suicide! Obviously, this clinical situation is not as comfortable as the kind that makes use of the traditional couch; still, it’s much more picturesque. The poor boy in question was suffocated by a mother full of stories who prevented him, at the required age, from admiring his father. In short, he has tangles in his particular Oedipus complex. In the end, catharsis takes effect (the failure of psychoanalysis will no longer be tolerated by the Hollywood censors) as the desperate character is about to come inside the hotel room—but a boy on the street accidentally turns on a spotlight that blinds the man, who falls from the ledge. It is then that two ends convene, one “bad” and in conformity with the facts: the man dies from the fall; the other “good” and more in line with the tradition of the happy ending: the would-be suicide is saved by a police net that had been stealthily placed one floor below him.

Fourteen Hours had originally ended with the protagonist’s falling to his death. Both endings were shot, but Hathaway preferred the realistic finish that showed the man falling all the way to the ground (not into a safety net), as had occurred in the Warde incident. However, on the same day the film was previewed, the daughter of Spyros Skouras—the president of Twentieth-Century Fox, the distributor of *Fourteen Hours*—jumped to her own death. Skouras consequently wanted the picture shelved, but instead he released it six months later [on March 1, 1951] with the ending that showed the protagonist surviving his fall. Unfortunately, both endings are in principle the same, since each one is accidental.

One hopes for a moment, towards the end, that the film will reveal at least a few minutes of truth: for example, that the distraught man, nearly convinced by the intervention of the psychiatrists and the policeman, suddenly discovers he can no longer jump even though millions of people have waited hours for him to jump. His gesture thus emptied of meaning for him, it becomes, in a manner of speaking, lethal to his audience. In a brief image from the documentary *Paris 1900* [1947,

Nicole Védre[s], by contrast, where we see a bird-like man perched on a platform of the Eiffel Tower, we realize from his anxious look towards the camera, with its lens fixed on him, that he is living his fear and, in a sense, will die from it. [Bazin refers to Franz Reichelt, an Austrian-born French inventor, who was filmed in February 1912 as he jumped from the first platform of the Eiffel Tower wearing a parachute of his own invention. The parachute failed to deploy, and he crashed to his death on the icy ground at the foot of the tower.] But something like this would have been the sort of overly serious, unusually pessimistic gesture that Hathaway's scenario prefers to leave out.

Let us think, by comparison, of what Marcel Carné and his screenwriters Jacques Viot and Jacques Prévert did with the deferred suicide of the Jean Gabin character in *Daybreak* [1939]. There, too, a man reflects for a long time—from twilight to dawn—alone with a revolver in his rented room, and if he kills himself in the morning, it is because he can find no other way to obliterate his memory. Doubtless in America, instead of the tear-gas canisters deployed in *Daybreak*, the psychologist on call at the local police station would have been sent to talk to Gabin from the roof. Without question, however, the Oedipus complex is even harder to penetrate in the hands of someone from the Bureau of Public Assistance.

We can also imagine what Roberto Rossellini would have done with the same subject. How touching his inquiry would have been, as his hero struggles against the moral unknown, especially if that struggle had ended in success, with the reconstitution of this man from the outside in the manner of a puzzle. Yet he would still remain a stranger, a person who ultimately knows nothing about what it means to jump into the void—like the boy in Rossellini's *Germany, Year Zero* [1948], who in fact leaps to his death from the ruins of a bombed-out building.

Let me add, in closing, that even on the formal plane of dramatic composition, Hathaway doesn't at all succeed—as he should have—in making the passage of time noticeable in *Fourteen Hours*. Fatally, the event depicted here could last three hours or three days without really affecting the rhythm of the final film. (*France-Observateur*, January 24, 1952)

Drama into Film: *A Streetcar Named Desire* & *Detective Story*

A Streetcar Named Desire, the 1947 play by Tennessee Williams, doesn't seem to me to be as good as some people think, and its international success doubtless arises mostly from its relative boldness as well as its eroticism. But this work is not without theatrical qualities: authentically dramatic, it also develops a certain poetic atmosphere that no doubt is more sincere than its erotic one. In particular, *Streetcar* offers actors a performance opportunity that is both lyrical and frenzied—the kind of frenzy, after all, that suits the contemporary theater, which is often private in the intimate sense of resembling a room where one can cry. Nonetheless, the failure of *Streetcar* in France was predictable, and would have occurred even if the connection in the drama between psychology and exoticism had been made closer and more inevitable. The action itself is too weak to sustain itself outside an Anglo-Saxon country without Williams' native tongue, which does not translate well into French.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Elia Kazan's film of *A Streetcar Named Desire* [1951] is in some ways "better than the play," because the movie director has more means than his counterpart in the theater to orchestrate a text that needs it. Here, an ambient space—where the set and the lighting suggest the particular universe to which this dramatic arena belongs—is essential. The movie of *Streetcar* thus loses nothing in its transition from stage to studio: on the contrary. Provided, however, that the director understands he does not have unlimited resources with which to take advantage of all the opportunities that present themselves. If he tries to show New Orleans,

for example, instead of just suggesting it, the text will sag like a popped balloon!

It was only a few years ago that the best filmmakers finally figured out that filmed drama was valid on the condition that it did not simply add cinema to the theater or even dissolve the play in a “cinematographic” adaptation, but instead respected the theatricality of the text, so as to serve it and confirm it with the resources of the camera. Like Jean Cocteau in *Les Parents terribles* [*The Storm Within*, 1948], Kazan saw that it was almost impossible to go outside in order to escape the main setting: the two rooms of the French Quarter apartment along with the courtyard of the building where it is housed. The rare incursions outdoors are never descriptive, though; their role does not exceed that of sound effects or stage music. All I want from *A Streetcar Named Desire*, in addition, is color. Paradoxically, it seems to me that color is now essential to filmed theater, and that outdoor pictures like *The African Queen* [1951, John Huston] could in fact be shot in black and white; whereas we suffer in *Streetcar* to hear the text invoke the blue of an otherwise desperately gray dress. And if *Les Parents terribles*, for its part, leaves me with any regret over its screen version, it is precisely because I miss the purple hue of a certain robe.

Finally, for this movie of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Kazan had at his disposal a selection of performers that one can imagine in a different configuration but hardly a better one. Vivien Leigh makes Blanche DuBois a faded Ophelia whose mythomania is surprisingly ambiguous. She also manages to substantiate the rumors about her quasi-nymphomania while otherwise remaining perpetually translucent and even abstract. Her ideal opposite here is Marlon Brando, whose sensuality and primitive force make him a rather prodigious Stanley Kowalski. The actors in the secondary roles themselves are no less good.

In any event, I cannot be suspected, at this point, of having a prejudice against filmed theater. Yet I wish that William Wyler had provided us once again with something on the level of his *Little Foxes* [1941], the most exemplary expression of filmed theater before the appearance of Cocteau’s *Les Parents terribles*. I am unable to say, then, that I was completely satisfied with Wyler’s adaptation of *Detective Story*

[1951], Sidney Kingsley's 1949 play, which achieved (alas!) a big success on Broadway. I certainly like the fact that Wyler respected the play's unity of time and place (all the action transpires, during the course of a single day, in the common room of a neighborhood police station in New York City); the few short scenes situated in adjoining areas serve only to relieve us of the monotony of the single setting. To refuse absolutely, in the cinema, to move outside a single location would mean going beyond the desired effect; visually, one must supply merely what it takes to avoid an artificial feeling of confinement. And Wyler knows perfectly here, as he did in *The Little Foxes*, how to find the right openings in the décor.

The set of *Detective Story* has just three walls, however, and the camera is irremediably pressed up against the invisible fourth wall—an easy strategy, to be sure, but one that is hardly forgivable in a director of such quality. It is solely the unsurpassed skill of Wyler's cropping that allows him, more or less simultaneously, to follow three to four simultaneous actions on this set with amazing precision and flexibility. Too bad those actions do not come with movement ... of the camera. (*France-Observateur*, April 10, 1952, & *Cahiers du cinéma*, June 1952)

Two American Films: *Diplomatic Courier* & *Monkey Business*

Diplomatic Courier [1952], shot in black and white, is a film directed by Henry Hathaway from a 1945 novel by Peter Cheyney. Didn't I write, just two weeks ago, about anti-Communist production in Hollywood? Well, here I go again.

This is a clever espionage picture in which the somewhat humorous accumulation of surprises is evidently meant to evoke Alfred Hitchcock (in particular *The Lady Vanishes* [1938]), but such a comparison should not be pushed beyond superficial analogies. The action is supposed to take place among spies in Trieste—paradise, we are told—during the Cold War. The document that justifies the film's adventures is nothing less than the plan of invasion, signed and dated, of Yugoslavia by the "Slavons," a shameless coinage that is nowhere to be heard on the soundtrack and is intended to replace the term "Soviets." The subtitles designed for the consumption of the French public actually use the word "Slavons"! Thus everything is clear: the German era of espionage cinema is over. Another one has begun courtesy of the Russians and the Americans.

Diplomatic Courier is skillfully made, rich in twists and turns, but totally lacking in significance. This little cinematic escapade never goes beyond what it literally portrays, and one searches in vain here for the artistry of a Hitchcock, an Ernst Lubitsch, or even the Joseph L. Mankiewicz of *5 Fingers* [1952].

Monkey Business [1952], for its part, is a comedy by Howard Hawks with a screenplay by Ben Hecht and Charles Lederer; it stars Cary Grant and Ginger Rogers. These names carry prestige. Hawks is

perhaps the only one of the great directors of the pre-war period to remain faithful to a classic conception of American film comedy. His last such movie to be released in France, *I Was a Male War Bride* [1949], was excellent. This new one does not equal it, probably because of the scenario—or rather its treatment on screen.

A scientist (Cary Grant) is experimenting on some chimpanzees with a new drug designed to function as an “elixir of youth,” but the results so far are disappointing. In the doctor’s absence, one of his chimpanzees gets loose in the laboratory, mixes a beaker of chemicals, and pours the mix into the water cooler. Of course, unlike the scientist, the animal succeeds in creating just the right combination of ingredients, however much by chance, and in the process transforms the drinking fountain into a fountain of youth. Grant will drink, followed by his wife (Ginger Rogers), and their sudden but non-simultaneous rejuvenation will produce various disruptions in this couple’s romantic life.

The moral of the story is that true youth lies in the heart and that the artificial kind can be very disappointing. It could have been enjoyable to see the illustration of such a moral from this comic fable: the difficulty lay in not being overwhelmed by the burlesque aspect at the expense of the fable. Thus there was material here for a kind of philosophic tale, but Hawks was not quite able to embody its essence. His dark variations on youthfulness, though in the form of gags, may go further than it seems at first—especially as interpreted by two actors, Grant and Rogers, who themselves are no longer so young. But, in my view, the moral satire of *Monkey Business* remains at the stage of intention, and the writers ceased to develop their idea with any seriousness beyond the two-thirds point in the picture.

Marilyn Monroe, who plays a secretary, is told in the course of the movie that she will be the number one pin-up girl of CinemaScope [as she was soon to be in such CinemaScopic, color films as *How to Marry a Millionaire* (1953), *There’s No Business Like Show Business* (1954), *The Seven-Year Itch* (1955), and *Bus Stop* (1956)]. Even as photographed here in black and white, using the spherical process, Monroe justifies the compliment! But Hawks played the eroticism of

this pretty woman against a droll humor that, throughout, borders on the bitter—an unfortunate circumstance in a film titled *Monkey Business*. (*France-Observateur*, February 26, 1953)

Stalag 17: Prisoners of War, in Both Senses

Thus far, the problem of prisoners of war has not concerned Hollywood, which has been interested in war's more dramatic aspects. This omission is probably due to the relatively low proportion of American prisoners during the last global conflict, whereas not only in World War II, but also in the First World War, the prison camp was a significant and lasting experience for the peoples of Europe.

Stalag 17 [1953, Billy Wilder] is for this reason an American original, since it is devoted exclusively to the classic prisoner-of-war camp as millions of Europeans have known it, and as treated by Jean Renoir, for example, in *La Grande illusion* [*Grand Illusion*, 1937]. In Wilder's film, we are at Stalag 17-B, which is reserved for U.S. sergeants. [A "Stalag," which is a contraction of the word "Stammlager" (literally, base camp), was a German prison facility intended especially for non-commissioned officers and privates.] More specifically, we are in Barracks IV of Stalag 17-B. The concentration on the daily life of these men, though disagreeably theatricalized (I shall return to this point), is materially and morally plausible; the precise accuracy of the décor contributes to the picture's verism. If it is true that the two authors of the original, 1951 play are former prisoners, we sense that they know what they are talking about. [The authors of the drama *Stalag 17*, Donald Bevan and Edmund Trzcinski, had in fact been prisoners of war in Germany.]

But what very quickly distinguishes the *Stalag 17* scenario from the traditional, European prisoner-of-war film is that it is not purposefully and primarily intent on depicting the condition of the inmates in exhaustive detail. In this sense, *Stalag 17* is just the opposite of *La Grande illusion*, where Renoir intentionally emphasized the social

and psychological diversity of his characters as well as the common problems of their lives—problems shared by their German guards. The socio-psychological aspect of a confined community of men is evoked by Wilder only incidentally and almost always in comic fashion, as a counterpoint to the principal action, which is essentially independent of historical circumstance. Here, barracks life and the prisoners' everyday concerns are, at best, only a set of conditions that happen to be especially suited to the development of the character at the center of the American picture: Sergeant J. J. Sefton.

At the beginning of *Stalag 17* the narrator, Clarence Harvey "Cookie" Cook (who is also a prisoner), introduces us to camp life, whose social virtues are mutual support, moral solidarity, and military discipline. Sefton, by contrast, is a shameless individualist—a dangerous combination of traits in such a context. One can imagine that, at the end of the war, he would choose to remain in occupied Germany as the king of the black market. But Sefton's cynicism is eventually revealed as *intelligence*, and therefore, objectively speaking, it is less dangerous than the virtuous folly of his fellow prisoners. Yet now I'm drawing conclusions that are not even outlined in the course of the film, for at bottom we shall know nothing until the end about Sefton—except that he was neither a coward nor a traitor nor a fool. The viewer is no more knowledgeable, then, than the comrades of this particular sergeant, who exudes an air of solitude and mystery throughout.

These are negative qualities in the script, however, and they leave us partially unsatisfied. Certainly, Sefton's personality had to remain a question mark, but mystery can be as profound and substantial as the truth. Here, though, the authors have succeeded only in indicating their character, not in describing him. The *mise-en-scène* reflects this impotence by almost always relegating Sefton to the background, behind the noisy manifestations of his comrades. From its theatrical source, from which it is poorly adapted, *Stalag 17* has thus retained the clamorous coarseness of comic effects and of secondary, caricatured roles. In other words, jests between characters predominate. Group fun regularly makes for clowning between the serious episodes, and these clownish insertions harm the film's credibility. These are conventions

that work in the theater, where turning a comic number can be justified, but they are damagingly artificial in a movie that aims at portraying its action in a realistic manner. Dramatic illumination is not the same as farcical exhibition—something that the screenwriters, Wilder himself and Edwin Blum, should have been taken into account.

The result is that we regret not knowing more about the curious personality of the narrator, who, in the film itself, is the man in whom Sefton confides and who lives his life as a parasite devoted to his host. Such a relationship deserved to be explored more, or else one should not have drawn attention to the character of Cookie in the first place by entrusting him with *Stalag 17*'s narration. In short, the psychological complications are somewhat skated over here in favor of an entertaining parade that is otherwise of subordinate interest.

These reservations do not prevent *Stalag 17* from being one of the most appealing American movies I have seen in the last six months: remarkably realized within the framework of an adaptation whose chief weakness, its over-theatricalization, is inherited, and as sympathetic a work in its intent as in its spirit. (*France-Observateur*, December 10, 1953)

The Caine Mutiny—or, A Conscience in Turmoil?

Let me say it right away: *The Caine Mutiny* [1954, Edward Dmytryk] is not a new *From Here to Eternity* [1953, Fred Zinnemann]. If the latter film made a few final, false concessions to the prestige of the American army (in my opinion rather benign ones and all legitimate), *The Caine Mutiny* makes several additional ones. What matters more than these concessions, though, is the movie's relative sweetening of military history. The kind of American novel from which this picture is taken [Herman Wouk's 1951 book of the same name] does not lend itself, it must be admitted, to a straightforward adaptation; long, diffuse, stuffed with secondary characters and digressions, it cannot easily be held to ninety or 100 minutes of projection time. The major characters of *The Caine Mutiny* do not have the romantic density of those in Zinnemann's film, it's true, although the adaptation of James Jones's *From Here to Eternity* [1951] was not a masterpiece, either. But I don't believe that the American adaptors in either case are lacking in skill; still, even if we sometimes allow ourselves in France to criticize the cinematic adaptations of Jean Aurenche and Pierre Bost, Hollywood needs to make greater effort if its work in this area is to come up to the level of these two men.

These reservations voiced, *The Caine Mutiny* is nevertheless an interesting and often appealing picture. There is no question that the officers of the destroyer-minesweeper *U.S.S. Caine* find themselves with a new leader, Lieutenant Commander Queeg (Humphrey Bogart), whose behavior is disturbing. A maniac for order, he grants to details a disproportionate importance at the expense of the essential. Worse still,

he loses his head in difficult situations. The other officers therefore quickly learn to hate him. Three of them plot a revolt up until the day when the ship is placed in danger by a typhoon, at which point the executive officer, Lieutenant Maryk (Van Johnson), who is second-in-charge, decides to take command in place of the panicked Queeg so as to save the ship. He must subsequently answer for his action before a court martial: is he a hero or a mutineer? The consensus at first does not appear to be favorable.

Ultimately, it is the mental breakdown of Commander Queeg during his testimony that saves the accused man from imprisonment or even execution. And this is precisely one of the main weaknesses of the scenario. Over the course of the film we were given too much evidence of the commander's madness to believe that the trial of the accused man is justified. On the contrary: another officer is more responsible for the mutiny, the best friend of the executive officer, Lieutenant Keefer (Fred MacMurray), a bastard who turns on his buddy at the decisive moment, testifying against him and in support of Queeg. This somewhat intellectual figure is inadequately accounted for here, however. (In Wouk's book Keefer is also a novelist, whose narrative of life aboard the *Caine*—which consistently takes the side of the accused Maryk—becomes a bestseller.)

But the inadequate characterization of Lieutenant Keefer only brings out more clearly the theme of *The Caine Mutiny*, the noting of which also causes one to note, with more than a little bit of interest, that the film is directed by Edward Dmytryk. I admit that the connection I am about to make at first seems incredible. Yet in order to see the authorial role of Dmytryk in this instance as something other than a coincidence, we must acknowledge that, for a director in the United States, freedom of choice among subjects is much greater than it is anywhere else. Nonetheless, since Dmytryk took up working for the independent producer Stanley Kramer in 1952—practically speaking, from the time he began to direct again after his censure, arrest, and jailing for subversive Communist sympathies—all his movies have revolved around the same theme: the moral and civic culpability of individuals traumatized by war, or, more generally, by events that exceed

the normal capacity of a human being to resist their psychological-cum-political pressure. Such was the case in Dmytryk's *The Sniper* [1952], and it continued to be the case in his picture *The Juggler* [1953].

You can see where I am heading: if not to believe that this ultimately cooperative witness before the House Un-American Activities Committee [in April 1951] felt the need, through his films, to plead "not guilty," then at least to think that Dmytryk's obsession in his own mind with his "un-American" actions was enough to lead him to this particular theme in his work as a director. Such a connection is already troubling. With *The Caine Mutiny*, it becomes astonishing, for the theme of guilt or responsibility (expressed through the figure of Commander Queeg) is supplemented by the theme of treachery (treason?): that of Lieutenant Keefer, who at the critical moment betrays the friend whom he had more or less forced into a court martial. Now Keefer makes it clear that, though physically courageous, he is too smart to take legal and professional risks he can avoid: such risk-aversion is congenital in him. Once his friend, Lieutenant Maryk, is acquitted—and knowing that the court's proceedings were held in secret, closed to public scrutiny—Keefer has the audacity to go and drink, with the other officers, to the happy outcome of the trial; his absence, in fact, would have given him away more than his damaging testimony did. To his friend Maryk, who is surprised that he had the courage to come, Keefer replies that he did not have the courage *not* to come. This character, as we see, is clever and judges himself by his own set of moral values; even as Queeg has the excuse of paranoid neurosis, he has that of diabolical intelligence.

Again, I dare not make more of this connection between Edward Dmytryk's private and professional lives than necessary, but I have to acknowledge that it is disturbing! (*France-Observateur*, October 14, 1954)

The High and the Mighty, or Written in Heaven

This is the very type of American blockbuster whose ambition is matched only by the ennui it produces. You may perhaps comprehend what I mean if I tell you that a screening of *The High and the Mighty* [1954, William Wellman] lasts more than two-and-a-half hours and that 90% of the film is taken up with psychological analysis of the reactions of the seventeen passengers, as well as five crew members, on a transatlantic plane threatened with destruction by an engine fire: will the plane be able to land, or won't it? Ditching is made almost impossible by rough seas; they have to land at all costs yet they will probably run out of fuel before they can do so. Throughout this night of anguish between Honolulu and San Francisco, each passenger or crew member reveals himself little by little, to himself in addition to others, as the potential catastrophe finally works a change in each character's angle on life. The subject could in principle be a grand one, but it would be necessary that the writer have strong kidneys in order to get through it without procrastination or interruption. (I doubt, moreover, that the book from which the movie is adapted [Ernest K. Gann's 1953 novel, also titled *The High and the Mighty*] is of particularly high quality.)

One suspects that the filmmakers were unable to resist, even more so than the novel, all the temptations that the subject offers. The most predictable approach, for instance, was the one used: to carefully select a representative sampling of American society, at least the part of it that flies, and naturally revisit Hollywood narrative conventions in the writing of the script. The crew itself is composed precisely in such a representative way: the captain, young, reticent, and capable, is placed

opposite the first officer, a veteran of the airmail service whose initiative and daring will ultimately save the plane; both of them are contrasted with the unmarried second officer, who still believes that flying is a game, unlike the older navigator, for whom nothing exists except his plane and his wife.

What emerges clearly from this trip to the realm of fear is that nothing is better than extreme danger to bring together, for one, a couple otherwise thinking of divorce. So never decide to separate from your wife, or, for that matter, never give in to the demon of drink, just before you have a plane crash! Nor is there anything better than a potential air disaster to put your moral or ethical ideas in order and to give you a clearer perspective on your everyday problems. In this regard, I can't see anything that can compete with the scenario of *The High and the Mighty* except the work of Marcelle Ségol. [Ségol (1896-1998) was for years the editor of the "Mail from the Heart" column in the magazine *Elle*; she was the woman who read and answered, and sometimes had printed, the letters written to her by women recounting their problems and asking for advice about emotional matters.]

Of course, the small group of people temporarily bound by a common fate in a narrow, closed space is an old and fruitful dramatic premise that has already been used brilliantly on the screen. Recall, for example, its use in *Stagecoach* [1939, John Ford]. But, besides the fact that such prior successes make its renewal here all the more problematic, the premise of *The High and the Mighty* is not exactly the same. For the simultaneous occupation of the plane by this group of passengers plays only an incidental role in the action. From the moment of the fire in the engine, which takes place during the first quarter of the film, external action featuring the characters will be short-lived and of little dramatic importance; and, once the fire is extinguished, the duration of the peril will be determined exclusively by the amount of fuel the plane has left. [The airliner is losing fuel from damage to a wing tank and, as a result, along with adverse winds and the drag of the damaged engine, the plane could eventually run out of fuel and be forced to ditch.] This dramatic restraint, where the characters are concerned, would be highly praiseworthy if it were not offset by the conventional accentuation of

psychological moments and the almost caricatured variety of the ensemble. All of this nullifies any possibility of intellectual depth and is in fact only a foolish privileging of character analysis over any other kind. There is something else that makes the whole enterprise particularly unpleasant: the “wonderful role” played by John Wayne, who is not for nothing the producer of *The High and the Mighty*.

But if one wants to disregard all these defects—that is to say, the film’s essence—*The High and the Mighty* deserves some attention for its technical aspects. CinemaScope [a process in which special, anamorphic lenses are used to compress a wide image into a standard frame and then expand it again during projection, resulting in an image that is almost two-and-a-half times as wide as it is high] was presented with an interesting challenge here by William Wellman. This aviation picture takes place almost entirely “within walls,” by which I mean inside the cabin. It might be thought that such an elongated area comports well with the widescreen format, but it is rare that the director has the opportunity to show the cabin in its length; the situation constrains him, on the contrary, to place his camera, according to a hierarchy of stars, in front of one plane seat or another: an alignment that, unfortunately, has no *a priori* affinity with the format of CinemaScope. Furthermore, since this is the very type of film that is essentially psychological, demanding the close-up three times out of four, one might from the start think it incompatible with CinemaScope.

It is therefore all the more significant that *The High and the Mighty* neither loses nor gains anything by being shot in CinemaScope. I was near Jean Cocteau the day he saw his first movie in such a format, and I remember that his enthusiasm (which, in fact, decreased with more exposure to the process) was not for the spectacular shots—landscapes, for example—but rather for the repeated close-ups of faces and (Cocteau said) even for the space that surrounded them. In this he was certainly right, and I found a confirmation in an initially unexpected place: the memoirs of Adolph Zukor [*The Public Is Never Wrong: My 50 Years in the Picture Industry*, 1953]. A pioneer of the cinema, who created the star system and has so powerfully contributed to producing films that enhance the actor’s prestige, Zukor remarks about Cinerama (his

words can be applied to CinemaScope, as well) that in this format the appearance of proximity between the spectator and the actor is powerfully increased. What interests him—the man who always thought that the attraction of the viewer to the star was the driving force behind cinematic success—is creating the impression of “the intimacy of the audience and the players, however it might be gained.” Indeed, the wide screen has contributed to such an impression, and probably also to the feeling of indeterminate and unused space that now surrounds close-ups of the face, whereas the delimitation of the traditional frame, its “window effect,” isolates exactly what it wishes to emphasize.

Let me add that it now seems some minor objections to CinemaScope can be dropped: the lenses have been perfectly adjusted, and the quality of the image is uniform over the entire surface of the screen. The lateral aberrations that were once so disturbing themselves appear to have been eliminated; the definition or distinctness of the image is satisfactory; and the color is no longer substantially washed out by the anamorphic process. Hooray! (*France-Observateur*, October 28, 1954)

On Kazan, Schulberg, and Saint/Brando: *On the Waterfront*

The latest movie by Elia Kazan was preceded by a huge publicity campaign and arrives in France sanctified by the artistic reputation of Marlon Brando. This conjuncture has some reason to make us hesitate between favorable predisposition and cynical distrust. Ambitious American pictures, when they pretend to be commercial, often succeed merely in being pretentious and, on the whole, are more irritating than a film serial. *On the Waterfront* [1954], for its part, happens to be both irritating and satisfying.

The screenplay was written by Budd Schulberg, as suggested by a series of articles on waterfront corruption in a New York newspaper. Schulberg, the author of *What Makes Sammy Run?* [1941] and *The Disenchanted* [1950], has sufficiently demonstrated through the main characters in these two novels the impossibility of writing a scenario of substance in Hollywood, and he gives us an example of that in the script of *On the Waterfront*. Unless he feels that he has actually done a daring and authentic job here, in which case the Hollywood rot would be even more extensive than he says it is. Nonetheless, in all fairness, what may be displeasing to us about this story, which in any case is poorly constructed, will undoubtedly be appreciated from an American perspective.

The real nature of trade-union life for the dockworkers of greater New York should be known in advance if one is to appreciate the truth of *On the Waterfront*'s details and the precise scope of certain of its *a priori* positions, which are not very sympathetic toward unions—which probably do not have the same meaning in the United States as

they do in our country. What is clear, in any event, is that the American longshoremen's unions are led less by an actual union boss than by someone more like a French impresario or business manager. And such agents are essentially dealers who only try to get the most out of a client in order to increase their own percentage of the financial take. The result is that some trade unions in the U.S. have passed into the hands of organized crime.

Taking this as his point of departure, Schulberg wrote a screenplay about gangsters with social pretensions. The gang in question, however, does not hesitate to liquidate those who have the courage to challenge its authority. The code of silence that prevails among the dockworkers—determined half by terror, half by anti-police prejudice—has allowed the mobsters, up to this point, to escape the scrutiny of the government Crime Commission. To break such stupid complicity on the part of the dockers, a priest who is a kind of shock-trooper descends on the waterfront. He might not succeed but for the love that comes to his aid in the guise of the sister of one of the mob's victims—a young woman who swears to unmask the guilty parties. Her presence will transform into reluctant heroism what was only mournful remorse in one of the murderous henchmen (Brando), who will testify against his bosses and thus finally break the code of silence that had ensured the impunity of their criminal organization. If the social significance of such a narrative seems debatable, *On the Waterfront's* value as a gangster film is in itself mediocre.

The best of the picture lies elsewhere, in the character of Marlon Brando and in his dealings with the young heroine, played by Eva Marie Saint. The international popularity of Brando is certainly something of a surprise to me. Still, I don't know of any young movie actor in the world who can compare with him. I even wonder if Hollywood has produced an actor of such magnitude since Gary Cooper. To be sure, Brando has hitherto been entrusted exclusively with roles that, to complement his astonishing physique, seem to limit him to simple-minded characters. But it is enough to remember that Brando was also admirable in the part of Mark Antony in the film of *Julius Caesar* [1953, Joseph L. Mankiewicz]; and if his role as Terry Malloy in

On the Waterfront once again appears to be solely the expression of a force of nature, we should not be mistaken about the intelligence of an actor who, without saying a word and almost without making a gesture, allows us to openly read his thoughts and feelings. I think in particular of the extraordinary romantic scene between Terry and Edie Doyle (Saint) in the park near the Catholic church. Indeed, in Brando there is a fascinating synthesis of the sensual mystery of primitive humanity, the classical beauty of ancient Greece, and the contemporary physicality of French Tahiti. He's like a dream out of some modern *Oresteia*. If the little celluloid pigs do not eat away at him, this actor will definitely go far. In fact, he already has.

The directing of Elia Kazan here is perhaps a little too wrapped up in its own sobriety, but it is often admirable and makes us regret all the more the weaknesses of the scenario. After the surfeit of neorealism that we witnessed in his *Boomerang* [1947], Kazan now uses the truth of the setting to strip it to its core and re-create a genuine social fantasy. Refusing to indulge in the picturesque aspect of his subject, he needs only one or two images to construct the dramatic décor and create its atmosphere. Beyond the disconcerting flaws in *On the Waterfront's* dramatic structure, one cannot forget, for example, the roof of a New Jersey apartment building bristling with television antennas—a shot that by itself sums up an entire civilization. (*France-Observateur*, January 20, 1955)

Broken Lance, Strange House: On a Film by Edward Dmytryk

Decidedly, this is the season for westerns—and for some good ones, too. Those who believed that the genre was in a state of decline were fooled, on the one hand, by the general crisis that has affected American movie production since 1950, and, on the other, by a bit of seductive reasoning that also clouded my thinking. To wit: certain films, such as *Shane* [1953, George Stevens] and *High Noon* [1952, Fred Zinnemann] (about which, in hindsight, I must say I do not subscribe to the reservations of my colleague Jacques Doniol-Valcroze [1920-89]), could indeed lead one to believe that the western was going to be divided more and more into two categories: the serial or semi-serial western, achieving at most the level of class “B” (which is not negligible); and the intellectual meta-western, aesthetically self-conscious, historically moralizing, or both. Thus died the great western, the logic goes—the one that, faithful to the laws of the genre and their epic sincerity, would serve them through significant artistic means and first-class talent. To clarify matters in this regard, one need only compare *Stagecoach* [1939, John Ford] with *Shane*. *Johnny Guitar* [1954], by Nicholas Ray, is itself an illustration of the meta-western in the sense that it is obvious the director has “played” the genre here and played on it through the use of his main actress [Joan Crawford].

With *The Big Sky* [1952], however, Howard Hawks probably created, once again, what I am calling a great western, one with no aesthetic or moral superstructure; and Edward Dmytryk now gives us, in *Broken Lance* [1954], new proof that the “grand western” is not dead. I will gladly define this picture as a serious western that is neither

intellectually pretentious, aesthetically preening, nor morally self-righteous: one that does not seek to create its own myth but naturally embodies its rhetoric within a framework of interesting and plausible psychology. *Broken Lance* deals with the traditional conflict between the independent cattle-breeder, the ranger of his ranch, easily assuming his rights under the law, and those who, with the help of the government, would draw others parties to the land for purposes besides raising livestock.

For burning down a nearby copper mine that has polluted the stream where he waters his cattle (and killed forty of them), Matt Devereaux is summoned to court, where his arrogant independence of action—as well as language—would have condemned him to prison if, on the advice of his lawyer, the youngest of his four sons had not taken responsibility for the crime. Released after three years in jail, the young man (born of his father's second marriage to an Indian woman, and therefore a half-breed in the eyes of his three half-brothers and the local population) finds the ranch in the hands of his oldest brother, who asks him to leave the state and establish himself somewhere else. (Their father, meanwhile, has died of a stroke, more out of anger than old age.) After an extended climax, the film completely justifies its final resolution in which the theme of racial prejudice understandably counts less than the favorite son's dissolution of the posthumous hatred against his tyrannical father. The essence of the subject thus lies in the character of Matt, as embodied by Spencer Tracy: a man with a need for sovereign authority, one who is incapable of yielding to the law when it goes against him and who transfers his patriarchal tyranny to his eldest son, if not to the next two in line.

I am correctly advised that the script of *Broken Lance* is taken from the same 1941 novel, by Jerome Weidman, from which an excellent movie was made by Joseph L. Mankiewicz: *House of Strangers* [1949]. [The screen adaptor, in both cases, was Philip Yordan.] But with Mankiewicz the action was modern and the protagonist (Edward G. Robinson) was a banker whose Italian origins provided the sociological explanation for his patriarchal tyranny. Dmytryk's kind of "remake," with transposition from one genre to another, is quite unexpected and

probably very unusual. This may diminish a little unfairly the merit of his film in the eyes of those who have seen *House of Strangers*, which is probably more faithful to the nature of fictional adaptation.

Yet it must not be forgotten that the western is not, by *its* very nature, a psychological genre, and that it is much more difficult to include within the framework of its rhetoric—which one proposes to respect—the inner substance of characters and their relations. In *Broken Lance* these relations are of admirable clarity and precision, perfectly integrated into the *a priori* themes of the western; they never sacrifice those themes, for to do so would be to sacrifice themselves in the process. In view of the versatility ultimately accorded to this genre (and agreed upon by Nicholas Ray, among others), the dramatic architecture here is comparable to that of a vast and solid stone bridge around which is situated a gaggle of tree trunks, powerful but roughly intertwined. I would particularly like to draw attention to the extraordinarily discreet yet nonetheless essential treatment of *Broken Lance's* racial motif. The psychological, even poetic, quality of Matt's relationship with his Indian wife, for example, is absolutely admirable.

Doubtless one can reproach Dmytryk's *mise-en-scène* for a certain lack of lyricism and imagination—in this respect, one could also criticize Nicholas Ray, but his work possesses other seductions. What is also noteworthy is the laborious dutifulness with which CinemaScope is used in *Broken Lance*, which gives the *mise-en-scène* a rigidity that makes for a certain dryness. Such severity, as one might guess, is not for me; I find it displeasing, and I think it characterizes the *oeuvre* of Dmytryk in general. To be sure, he is not a brilliant director, yet it is in his overall seriousness, a certain scrupulous intelligence that characterizes a sensibility in the process of awakening, that one must seek the key to his cinematic style. In any event, I would like to consider *Broken Lance*—after the interesting series of low-budget movies that he made for Stanley Kramer, followed by the already conclusive evidence of the otherwise somewhat heavy *The Caine Mutiny* [1954]—the real film of Hollywood re-entry for the former Communist Edward Dmytryk: a re-entry that comes at the end of a purgatory abroad that, alas, may have been well-deserved. (*France-Observateur*, March 3, 1955)

The Space Race: *Conquest of Space* & *The Racers*

I admit that there is, *a priori*, little in common between the two films that I am going to discuss today in a single article, and that the comparisons in which I shall now indulge are a bit conjectural. One of the films, *The Racers* [1955, Henry Hathaway], is in CinemaScope and aims, through a romantic scenario, to tell a story of some documentary value. This is a movie that deserves to be taken seriously. The other, *Conquest of Space* [1955, Byron Haskin], is, by contrast, a science-fiction work in the same vein as *Destination Moon* [1950, Irving Pichel]. Nevertheless, in these two 1955 pictures, which are so different in subject matter and in the quality of their *mise-en-scène*, I discern two common denominators: one negative, the weakness of each one's script; the other positive, the poetry of each film's technique and décor.

Let's start with *Conquest of Space*. It unfortunately confirms ten times over what I have written in the past about science-fiction movies: Hollywood's repeated failures in this field ironically derive from the most realizable and least expensive element, the screenplay. It is by no means in the areas of *mise-en-scène* and realism that the cinema in general has failed so far, but, on the contrary, in the area of imagination: that is, for failing to make way for at least a minimum of it at the level of the script. With *Conquest of Space*, I must admit that all records have been broken in this regard. Infantile is too weak an adjective for such a film! Cretinous, however, would be a misnomer because I do not think that its multiple screenwriters [Chesley Bonestell, Willy Ley, Philip Yordan, Barré Lyndon, George Worthing Yates, and James O'Hanlon] are cretins, properly speaking. They have even supplied their space

picture with a few humorous moments and two or three decent ideas—that are then otherwise willfully suppressed.

No, it is more to the point that the producer, George Pal, a former Hungarian animator and creator of special effects who also produced *Destination Moon*, demanded with persistent and systematic obstinacy that, among all the contingencies available, his writers had to come up with a quintessentially stupid one—stupid to such an extent that a simple chain of events here frequently becomes incoherent. In the same way that a plethora of insufficiently controlled but ingenious ideas, or even lines of dialogue, can disrupt a scenario, the scenario of *Conquest in Space* is often disrupted by its lack of the most rudimentary psychology, simply because the producer did not have the courage to renounce the imbecility of a character's behavior or a scene's drama as composed by one of his scenarists.

Please do not tell me that appreciating such a film is a question of being on the same mental level as the science-fiction comic strips. I have been there. At least their puerility is accompanied, in the best cases, by a freedom of imagination totally absent here. *Conquest of Space*, by contrast, seeks to compensate the marvels of science only through the utmost artistic convenience, through conventional drivel in every sense of the word, as if the novelty of the subject required a compensatory regression in ideas and emotions. In *Them!* [1954, Gordon Douglas], we saw something like this in the last part of the movie with the stupid rescue of the children abducted by the ants. We also saw it in *Them!* in the utterly conventional character of the scientist and his pretty wife—a doctor of the science of madness, as it were.

Similarly, in *Conquest of Space*, we get the general commanding the rocket who reads the Bible in paperback, the doing of which, moreover—here's an ambiguous result!—helps to drive him mad. We also get, above all, the incredible character of the sergeant, strong as a gorilla, faithful as a Saint Bernard, and someone who would allow himself to be cut into small pieces for the general who saved his life several years earlier during the Korean conflict, and who has never given up on the idea of war against Red China. You read correctly! We even have a Chinese war planned in this film some time between 1955 and the

conquest of Mars—the Red Planet—in the 1980s. Such are the liberties of fiction ...

As I remind myself of these details, I am increasingly convinced of the conscious and programmatic nature of their stupidity, and I wonder if some sci-fi fans won't also take a perverse pleasure in noting them. For someone like me, who loves the genre and takes it seriously, I can only seethe in white-faced anger. However, *Conquest of Space* does contain another, fortunately positive, lesson, which is that the reality of a motion picture can exist in the margins of its script. The idiocy of *Destination Moon* was less aggressive, it's true, yet it also completely lacked any poetry of technique. I do not know who should get the main credit among the art directors (J. MacMillan Johnson and Hal Pereira), the set decorators (Sam Comer and Frank McKelvy), and Byron Haskin, the director of *Conquest in Space*, but the technical universe that the film introduces and sustains is very often convincing. With the exception of a few less than successful matte shots and several special effects that are too transparent, this picture creates an imaginary scientific universe that is not only plausible but also beautiful. It is merely a matter of comparing *Destination Moon's* self-contained space suits with those of *Conquest of Space* to measure, if I may say so, the progress that has been made over the last five years.

What I like still more, though, are the little details: the shape and substance of the containers of compressed food; the plastic bottles; the metal furniture, in all its color, and the dynamic naturalness with which these men use it in the absence of gravity. The bridge to the soul of science fiction, well known since Jules Verne, is passed over here with notable discretion: I refer to two or three moments, never overemphasized, that are worth more for what they suggest than for what they show. Their interest lies in the familiarity that they assume not only between the characters of the film and the absence of gravity, but also between the idea of a world without gravity and the viewers in the audience. Each of these moments involves the exploitation of a true science-fiction culture among members of the public. *The Conquest of Space* refers to it constantly without (understandably) accounting for it. (Such a culture does not mean, alas, a true *scientific* culture, as the

advertising displayed on the façade of the movie theater proves: “Ten million miles *in the air*.”)

As we know, certain physical motifs related to outer space, including weightlessness, have by now passed through the comic strips into the common imagination. All that was needed on celluloid was an example of such a motif, and we get it in *Conquest of Space*: a very beautiful image, not at all offered like an exhibition of bravery, of the take-off of the rocket and the consequences of its acceleration on the faces of the passengers. Obviously, it was necessary in this instance to pass the actors through a sort of centrifuge, to re-create the terrifying contortions of the face muscles that reports about the piloting of jet planes have already made familiar to us. The use of these faces here, in a highly dramatic situation, gives them a singular beauty.

Thus, it is not prohibited to find some pleasure in George Pal’s film to the extent that its intriguing material overflows its scenario on all sides. All things considered, this is also what can be said of *The Racers*, a movie romance about motor racing. God knows that such a subject can provide good material for scenarios. Among the thousand possible solutions to the problem of a good *scenario*, however, the producer, Julian Blaustein, has retained the silliest and the most conventional: that of the conflict between love and love of vocation. Again, on this theme one can imagine a number of plausible and ingenious variations, but here the least likely is chosen: after being badly injured in an accident, Kirk Douglas, upon recovery, becomes a bad competitor who does not hesitate to win a race by sending his best buddy into a ditch. His wife, disgusted, leaves him until he returns to better form. Ah! Well, at least *The Racers* cannot be blamed for the weaknesses to be found in *The Barefoot Contessa* [1954, Joseph L. Mankiewicz] ...

But do we remember the story of *The Racers* after the film? For my part, fortunately, I remember just the admirable images and the repeated shots of the photogenic racecars. So as not to compete with them, Bella Darvi was given the leading female role. The true stars, however, are those beautiful, gleaming metal monsters that happily justify the frankness of the picture’s brilliant colors. Now, perhaps, you can see the connection between this world and the technical landscape

of science fiction. For it is here also that the poetry of the object, its rigor yet its gratuitousness, becomes the true subject matter of the film.

Let me add that the racing scenes were shot on location at the chief European circuits and that, in the process shots, all the visual planes are perfectly joined. The mattes, in particular, remain strictly seamless throughout. The format of CinemaScope is naturally suited to creating all the movie's sought-after special effects, yet once again the color cinematography seems to me to deserve the main praise. It is known that in CinemaScope, color often appears not only ugly but also washed out by the process of enlargement. For the first time in *The Racers*, it possesses the directness and density of the color found in good pictures made in the traditional format. Even when the film shows the generic checkered flag, its little black squares have the rich duskiness of velvet. How's that for color? (*France-Observateur*, July 21, 1955)

White Knight, Good Day: *Bad Day at Black Rock*

In 1945, in a village of forty inhabitants isolated in the desert, the train stops for the first time in four years. A man gets off that nobody knows, and whose intrusion into this tiny community of Black Rock creates an eerie discomfort. The stranger has lost his left arm. His name is John J. Macreedy. One learns that he has come here, to the American Southwest, to find a certain Komoko, a Japanese-American who once owned a ranch in the area. The inhabitants, worried, quickly make the visitor feel—some without malice and others with hostility, but all with insistence—that he should leave again right away. The one who appears to be the kingpin in this situation, a certain Reno Smith, assures Macreedy that Komoko had been sent to an internment camp three months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and hasn't been seen or heard from since. The stranger does not hide his disbelief and therefore goes to the location of Komoko's former ranch, where he finds the remains of a burned farmhouse and the traces of a grave. Back in the village, Macreedy suggests to Smith that, in a sense, he has discovered what he came looking for.

From this point on, it is clear that Reno Smith is determined to prevent the traveler from leaving the area alive, that he has the support of the majority of the village in this matter, and that any dissenting residents would be too cowardly to oppose him. Little by little, the net tightens around the intruder. His telegrams to the state police are not sent, nor are his phone calls to the authorities put through, and the local sheriff lets himself be dismissed and replaced by one of Smith's men. The visitor then reveals to the hotel desk clerk, who may be willing to

help him, that he came to bring a medal to Komoko, a posthumous one given to this Japanese man's son for his conduct on the battlefield in Italy, where he had saved the life of Macreedy himself.

The desk clerk finally confesses that Komoko was murdered by Reno Smith and his drunken friends on the night of the announcement of the Pearl Harbor attack. Since then, though the whole village has been silenced by Smith and his accomplices, time has chipped away at the solidarity or unanimity of the locals' cowardice. And as a result of the desk clerk's revelations, his sister apparently even agrees to help Macreedy flee in her jeep; in fact, she is driving him into a trap: Smith is waiting for them outside town. He treacherously kills the girl to remove one witness. Macreedy is able to hide behind the jeep although, unarmed, he appears doomed—until he finds a bottle and fills it with gasoline, creating a Molotov cocktail that will reduce Smith to a human torch. In the village, now freed from its shame, the train stops again to take the stranger back where he came from.

Despite the obvious lessons of anti-racism and societal morality involved in this scenario, I was not able at first to discover the political keys to *Bad Day at Black Rock* [1954, John Sturges]. They become quite clear, however, when one realizes that it is a film of the American Left and more precisely of anti-McCarthyism. The name of the hero happens to be that of a Scottish clan that is the traditional enemy of the McCarthy clan. The missing arm is the symbol of the Left, reduced to silence. Nor is it a coincidence, in my view, that the murderer is called by the common American surname of Smith—as in the legion of Smiths out there who may be just like him, in spirit if not in action. Without adding to the artistic quality of the movie, this political background at least enhances its intellectual appeal. Reading the picture's politics through the grid of its action is something of a pleasure, I must say.

John Sturges's *mise-en-scène* is careful to expand to the dimensions of CinemaScope. It intelligently uses the extra screen space of the desert vastness to make clear Spencer Tracy's loneliness or apartness, and to give a dramatic value to the unusual setting of these few houses scattered in the dust. *Bad Day at Black Rock* is not, however,

a masterpiece; it is at best a sympathetic film, well done, that is sometimes engaging. (*France-Observateur*, October 6, 1955)

East of Eden, West of Paradise

The latest film by Elia Kazan was reasonably well-received this year at the Cannes Festival, where the jury nonetheless preferred—despite its intellectual and aesthetic ambitions in addition to the sumptuousness of Kazan's directing—the simple and modest *Marty* [1955, Delbert Mann]. Personally, I was bored to death at the spectacle of such a pretentious picture as *East of Eden* [1955], with its noxious heaviness, and whose every image appeared to me to make a claim to Art with a capital “A.” However, I have learned to hedge my Festival judgments, and this particular picture, in any case, was worthy of a judgment on appeal. As I foresaw, it has gained enormously. I still have little affinity for such company, yet I was much more sensitive, on a second viewing, to Kazan's sincerity and the undeniable lyrical power of his *mise-en-scène*, which, though probably too willful or conscious, is elevated from within by its powerful grounding in art as well as life.

Steinbeck Respected?

East of Eden is the adaptation of John Steinbeck's 1952 novel, which I confess that, up to now, I have not had the courage to read. So I will not comment on Kazan's faithfulness to Steinbeck. In any case, it is necessary to give the director credit for endeavoring to give his characters and their actions a density, a novelistic complexity, that places them in metaphysical perspective instead of spreading them out flat on a psychological check-sheet. Freudianism and psychoanalysis were indeed discussed at Cannes in relation to this movie. But the intention of Kazan, if not of Steinbeck, is not psychological: it is, on the contrary, openly moral and religious; his method is purely allegorical; and the sources of the narrative itself are manifestly biblical.

East of Eden is a sort of transposition of the story of Cain and Abel. The transposition is in fact very free yet at the same time historically plausible and realistic, since the story is set in the American West of 1917-1918 and Adam Trask (with sons Cal and Aron) is a pioneer in the business of shipping vegetables long-distance by refrigerated railcar. Finally, however, the analogies are too transparent even if they are fairly well supported. One is thus able to sympathize only moderately with this kind of picture, but one can nevertheless love it for its details. For there are some beautiful ones!

Then, too, Elia Kazan is perhaps the first to discover how to use CinemaScope in a film consistently centered on human beings. While the most skillful directors have so far succeeded only in making us forget the uselessness of half the screen in scenes of pure character psychology, Kazan always uses it fully. Precisely because his purpose is not psychological, the setting is never distinct from the moral-cum-spiritual quality of a scene. Its function is not decorative, and one always senses even the space beyond the screen as well as the mobility or expansiveness of the frame—which never reverts back to what it would be in a movie shot in the traditional format.

Perhaps the recent death of the young actor James Dean (Cal) is already fading in public memory. But *East of Eden* eternally captures his reflection in just the right kind of light. (*France-Observateur*, November 3, 1955)

Amen!: King Vidor's *Hallelujah*

I am from a generation too young to have paid attention to the early sound era and to the originality of this celestial movie from it: King Vidor's *Hallelujah* [1929], about which I learned—only through the unanimous testimony of film historians—that it constituted the first convincing illustration of the new art of talking pictures. Yet I must admit that their admiration seemed to me to have something conventional and stereotypical about it, with each writer repeating the opinion of Maurice Bardèche and Robert Brasillach [*History of Film* (1935, 1943)] that the famous pursuit in the marshes, toward the end of the movie, had revealed the evocative power of sound by “making the silence audible” (?). Such a piece of technical bravura could rightly have impressed cultivated audiences as the first artistic use of contrapuntal sound, but I fear that any admiration they might have had, relative to the evolution of film technique, has never been realized, since *Hallelujah* is rarely seen in our cinema clubs or even our film archives. And why is that?

We know too well that retrospectives, which have multiplied since the war, have been the occasion for revisions of critical hierarchies. Moreover, there is nothing unusual about this. Yet so far hierarchies of cinematic value have been rather less upset by the progress of time than those of the other arts, especially given the acceleration of history in the comparatively young art of cinema. So I went to see *Hallelujah* as one goes on a pilgrimage to a historical monument, almost convinced that, with academic deference, I had to admire a work that would have aged all the more because of its formal qualities, which the historians had praised in particular.

A Documentary on the Black Soul

I stand corrected. The re-release of *Hallelujah* in France now calls for a real review, and it can only be in the film's favor. This picture's re-release in the United States, in 1939, is a date to remember in the history of cinema, in the same way as the re-release of Charlie Chaplin's *The Gold Rush* [1925] in 1942 or his *City Lights* [1931] in 1950. Bardèche and Brassilach had rightly asserted (having seen the film upon its 1929 release when they wrote their history) that *Hallelujah* was "one of the four or five most important works made for the screen." But they also thought that it was primarily significant for its use of sound, whereas King Vidor's movie reveals, especially today, that it is the most prodigious lyrical documentary ever made on the subject of the black soul. If *Hallelujah* is indeed the prototype of the sound film, it is much more for the pure and direct reproduction of the words and songs that constitute an essential element of the reality in question, than for the famous (and always admirable) sequence of Zeke's pursuit of Hot Shot through the swamp. Before we "hear the silence," the cinema speaks first, simply to reveal the beauty of sound *per se*—in short to enable us to hear at the same time that we see.

For those who have not seen *Hallelujah* or retain merely a rough recollection of it, King Vidor's masterpiece occupies first place among the best films on jazz and Negro spirituals, though this "best" list includes only two other movies: *The Green Pastures* [1936, Marc Connelly & William Keighley], which is really no more, in the end, than a bland sheep's pen of a picture; and *Carmen Jones* [1954, Otto Preminger]. Not, however, that Vidor's film is free from convention and artifice; I shall return to this point, but, although *Hallelujah* is astonishingly realistic, it is very far from the neorealism of today. The scenario is basically a transposition of the theme from *Carmen* [1845, Prosper Mérimée; 1875, Georges Bizet]; for those who saw *Carmen Jones*, which is adapted from Mérimée's novella and Bizet's opera, Preminger's sources are so obvious that it is permissible to consider his "black Carmen" as a kind of ingenious and very free remake of *Hallelujah*. In her sex appeal, Dorothy Dandridge (Carmen) was the 1954 version of 1929's Nina Mae McKinney (Chick). That said, we are very sensitive at

first to the fact that the chief actors in Vidor's movie "play Negro" according to the American white convention that wants the colored man to be childish, inspired, and happy just to be alive—but adaptable and instinctive at the same time. Still, McKinney, Daniel L. Haynes (Zeke), William E. Fountaine (Hot Shot), and the choral group known as the Dixie Jubilee Singers have obviously acquired some highly effective technique from their work in the American theater, and now they display it on celluloid.

The Realism of Vidor

Twenty-five years after the film's making, "playing Negro" may be an even more sensitive matter, and I was not alone in being embarrassed during the first fifteen minutes of *Hallelujah*. After that, it hardly matters anymore, and one definitively gives up trying to distinguish the natural from the artificial in this picture. (It is undoubtedly the case that the black musical arts, as exhibited here, are themselves very special; one of the reasons is that, in the early 1930s, jazz was still close to its roots.) The spectacular achievement of the main performers in the movie is ultimately an element, not of falsification, but solely of functionality. These black actors, mingled with a crowd of anonymous blacks, rediscover the social and psychological foundation of a primitive inspiration, and reciprocally act upon this mass as a kind of leaven.

Speaking of his performers, King Vidor said, "They were not playing: they *lived* according to episodes from their own history. Perhaps one could come to speak of sincerity, yet such a word is really useless in this context" (quoted by Marcel Lapiere in *The Hundred Faces of Cinema* [1948]). It is indeed such sincerity in the second degree that is the miracle of the film, and that allows us to admire its realism. To be sure, *Hallelujah* is not a realistic documentary, social or political, if we mean by this a piece of exhaustive testimony on the historical situation of the black worker cultivating cotton in the Southern states. Georges Sadoul is right to note, in his own commentary on *Hallelujah*, that "the problems of segregation and quasi-slavery are not posed in a film where cotton is plucked while dancing and singing, as if one were at the music hall." I think that Sadoul is wrong, however, to write exclusively in the

passive voice about a picture that is situated on a completely different plane.

An Ethnographic Film

King Vidor's realism focuses on black spirituality, but in this realm his work is at once sublime and pitiless. His fantastic reconstructions of the phenomenon of collective religiosity, from which the Negro spirituals gradually emerged as the increasingly musical modulation of a delirium close to hysteria, have the value of both ethnographic documents and dramatic liturgies of the most imperishable beauty. The genius of Vidor lies here in his simultaneous capacity for sympathy and objectivity.

Nothing is softened or watered down, and the psychologist therefore finds himself in the presence of an integral document without spurious stylization. Yet at the same time nothing is hidden concerning the ambiguous nature of the spiritual, and its otherwise frenzied manifestations are the direct source of songs and dances whose authenticity, both religious and aesthetic, we can only admire.

Hallelujah is thus probably the film that goes the farthest in the psychosociological description of a faith-based phenomenon, but whereas such realism would seem *a priori* to imply criticism, Vidor, on the contrary, has made it the fundamental element of a lyric and tragic epic whose ultimate realism is that of myth.

For it is obvious that segregation cannot be a problem in a universe that is presented to us as being exclusively black. The existence of the white man in *Hallelujah* is not even suggested. And though I *want* cotton to be an instrument of misery and enslavement in historical reality, in the film it is the symbol of communal labor and family happiness—that is, of an order without sin that the Devil is attempting to disrupt. The whiteness of cotton, the snow of the South, and the arduous virginity of the soul in bodies of black skin: that is what you see here! Vidor had, moreover, the intelligence not to exploit the plastic expressionism in this latent Manichaeism of colors; the struggle between good and evil is never formally or visually exteriorized. It happily remains interior to these beings, but the Devil is nevertheless there even as he was in the mystery plays of the Middle Ages.

I am aware of shortchanging the film through this interpretation, yet what interpretation would not shortchange it? Whatever light one wishes to throw on *Hallelujah* plunges it into a kind of darkness that prevents the elucidation of the work *in toto*. One may like this movie for numerous reasons of form or substance, because in the end it is probably the result of a unique conjuncture of favorable circumstances. Born, on the one hand, at the same time as the new sound cinema—at a time when lyricism was still possible or realism was not incompatible with great dramatic stylization, when the fear of naïveté had not yet sterilized the artistic imagination—*Hallelujah* embraces, on the other hand, the maturity of jazz at a moment when it was still open to communication with its historical sources. It is no coincidence that the first such picture, *The Jazz Singer* [1927, Alan Crosland], seems to be a crude and caricature-like sketch of King Vidor's film. Those who promoted "Negro art" in the West discovered in American jazz its most significant manifestation, founded on the most picturesque of social realities; it had the advantage, as well, of fomenting a musical revolution, evidence of which we see here. [A sequence of vital importance in the history of classic jazz occurs in *Hallelujah* in the low-life black dancehall, where Nina Mae McKinney performs Irving Berlin's "Swanee Shuffle."]

Great cinematographic events like *Hallelujah* are thus always the fruit of great sociological events. Indeed, this film is an eternal testament that transcends both its author-director and the history of cinema itself. (*France-Observateur*, November 17, 1955)

Urban Education: *Blackboard Jungle*

The appearance and widespread adoption of CinemaScope did not reduce to zero—as only superficial reasoning could have forecast—the number of black-and-white films with no desire to feature spectacle. On the contrary, and by a process whose dialectic may offer its own explanation, cinema has begun to approach television through the very movement that otherwise distances TV from its competitor. Indeed, if the 3-D offensive, currently confined to the wide screen and CinemaScope, was aimed at neutralizing television through its spectacular quality, it was necessary to envisage that, conversely, a minority of film production, abandoned as it has been by the cinema of grand spectacles and big budgets, would go in the same direction as television. In art, as in physics, there is no action without an equal and opposite reaction.

To wit: CinemaScope was intended to make television appear like film-at-a-discount, but for the audience now accustomed to the inferior image of the small home screen, a small-scale, traditionally formatted, black-and-white motion picture needed, in return, to look like “better” television. What in this whole enterprise ran the risk, more or less, of disappearing was something in-between: that is to say, the film with semi-spectacular ambition and an average budget. But it was predictable that intelligent producers—speculating on the disappointment, perhaps unconscious but no less real, of a part of their clientele faced with exclusively spectacular cinema—would get the idea of producing, at limited expense, movies that would attract the public essentially through the moral, social, or intellectual interest of their subject: films *without* spectacle that would address the conscience rather than the imagination. Notably, in this vein, we got the celebrated *From*

Here to Eternity [1953, Fred Zinnemann] two years ago. Yesterday it was *Marty* [1955, Delbert Mann], and today it is *Blackboard Jungle* [1955, Richard Brooks].

Richard Brooks's film (notorious for the incident it inspired at the Venice Festival, where the U.S. ambassador opposed its screening) confines itself to dealing with a theme that has often been treated by the cinema: delinquent or even predatory adolescence. But *Blackboard Jungle* revitalizes this theme through its social activism and its documentary realism. We Europeans have heard about the exacerbation of the "youth problem" in the United States in recent years. Brooks reveals a specific aspect of it. Since, in some American states, the educational system has increased the mandatory age of attendance to eighteen, there are now semi-professional or vocational-technical schools in difficult neighborhoods whose students no longer regard themselves as children but have not yet assumed the responsibility of adults—responsibility that could give meaning and order to their lives. Certainly, being a teacher at a school of this type is not a happy experience.

Blackboard Jungle shows most of the students in question as being resigned, anxious, and eager only to get to the end of the academic year without incident. But a new instructor, Richard Dadier (Glenn Ford), recently demobilized from the armed forces, is ambitious to win his charges over and interest them in learning. He tries first to obtain the confidence of a young black who appears to him to be the "boss" of the class, but he is quickly thwarted thanks to the maneuvers of a lone thug who speculates adroitly on the possibly racist nature of such a student-teacher encounter. Faced with this failure, which is confirmed by the dramatic misadventures of some of his colleagues, will Dadier give up? He was greatly tempted when he discovered that his "adversaries" had gone so far as to attempt to separate him from his wife by means of despicable, anonymous letters. But he recovers, gains the confidence of the black student during a school holiday, and dares, finally, to confront the black sheep in front of the whole class. The ugly little bastard, drunk with anger and drugs, attempts to kill the teacher but the class comes to his defense. This time, Dadier wins definitively.

To be fair, we must distinguish in *Blackboard Jungle* among several elements. The construction of the script is as conventional as possible and it even borders on the worst sort of melodrama. This is a pity but happily it does not compromise the essential element, which is the truth of the social and human situation, whose realism seems irrefutable. I certainly prefer a conventional screenplay and a film that is true in its characterization and its substance to a clever, inventive intrigue whose material, in the end, only sounds false notes (which is a bit the case with the recent French movie *The Little Rebels* [1955, Jean Delannoy]). However, in this instance, we might wish to have a fuller picture of the school itself and of the after-school life of the students, as the film rarely leaves the boundaries of the classroom. But the reason, no doubt, is the limited means put at the disposal of Richard Brooks, and one must also believe that the American public itself probably can guess about what we in France do not see or know.

From a more strictly cinematographic point of view, *Blackboard Jungle* is especially worth seeing for the extremely convincing casting and remarkable direction of its young actors. Nothing is more difficult than to make teenagers play truthfully, let alone twenty or so of them at one time. Richard Brooks knew how to succeed in this matter: by getting them all to participate, all the time, but especially in the explosive moments, which are very strong indeed. It should be noted in this connection that the two principal young performers [Sidney Poitier as the black, Gregory Miller, and Vic Morrow as the thug, Artie West] play "Marlon Brando." The question arises as to whether Brooks has conformed to the taste of the day, which would not be very laudable on his part, or whether such acting is a realistic phenomenon that reveals the influence of cinema on the younger generation—which perhaps would be very laudable. (*L'Éducation nationale*, January 12, 1956)

Filled with Life's Fury: *Rebel Without a Cause*

Nicholas Ray is, along with Robert Aldrich, the poster boy of the young French critics favorably disposed toward American cinema, who see mainly in these two names the proof of the vitality, in spite of everything, of Hollywood. I am far enough along, in my own opinions, to join my young friends in their admiration, even taking into account any polemical safety margin that I might wish to invoke. As far as Ray is concerned, I can now only give these critics credit for their original assessment.

The failure in Paris of the first Nicholas Ray film, *They Live by Night* [1948], was itself stunningly brutal, but I confess that I did not find anything more interesting in Ray's *Knock on Any Door* [1949], *In a Lonely Place* [1950], and *On Dangerous Ground* [1951]. *Johnny Guitar* [1954] was the first movie of his to make me reconsider the tempering of my esteem and to make me think that the Nicholas Ray fanatics were right. After *Rebel Without a Cause* [1955], there can no longer be any doubt about it.

Young Bulls

We know about the aggravation of the problem of juvenile delinquency in America in recent years. But such delinquency, properly speaking, is clearly a sign of moral evil among young people—an evil whose manifestations go far beyond police control. The current crisis must undoubtedly be regarded as an aftermath of the Second World War (although juvenile delinquency is beginning to regress in Europe); it also seems, unfortunately, that we should discern less accidental causes of a

sociological and pedagogical nature: in particular, the partial bankruptcy of the liberalism of American education.

In any case, the facts point to the revival of a dramatic theme that is already old news and has been treated by all the cinemas of the world, yet one that adds a new shade in its latest American embodiment. I refer naturally to *The Wild One* [1953, Laszlo Benedek], *Blackboard Jungle* [1955, Richard Brooks], and to this latest film by Nicholas Ray, whose English title, *Rebel Without a Cause*, is more meaningful than its French one, *La Fureur de vivre* [*The Fury of Life*].

Like the protagonists of *The Wild One*, those of *Rebel Without a Cause* suffer from their own spiritual emptiness. Between the freedom of their childhood-cum-adolescence and their responsibility as adults, they seem to have to pass through a moral “no man’s land” where the game easily turns to tragedy. They are, if I may say so, young bulls in the very image of American society—brutal and efficient in an arena where the proof of existence matters more than the sweetness of life. These youths do not work out on beaches; they play at mimicking murder, as in the extraordinary scene in which one guy forces the newcomer [Jim Stark, as performed by James Dean] to fight with a knife and they both get scratched up. Finally, we see mime become reality in the absurd contest in which one of the teens will die, a kind of Russian roulette played with stock cars—a scene that retrospectively takes on a tragically premonitory color after the actual death of James Dean in an automobile accident [in September of 1955, before *Rebel Without a Cause* was even released].

Moral Poetry

Whoever desires to criticize the scenario of *Rebel Without a Cause* in detail will not want for reasons to do so. For the logical and dramatic rigor of the screenplay is not the strong point of the films of Nicholas Ray. This passionate and sensitive director is visibly interested only in scenes themselves: he mocks their sequence. The material or psychological likelihood of scenes, which themselves are often lovingly realistic, is the least of his concerns. As in the case especially of Jean Renoir, the reality in question is beyond superficial truth; it resides in

what I shall call the soul of the scene, or better, perhaps, its moral poetry, at any rate its lyricism.

An image imposes itself on me with which to evoke the cinematic style of Nicholas Ray: nourished both by acidic violence and tenderness, dark despair and love, it is that of a violin melody played at the highest pitch, at the limit of tolerance of the human heart as well as the human ear. *Rebel Without a Cause* is the film that pushes even further this quest on Ray's part for the ultimate pitch—in fact, I can say that its “sound” breaks my heart. Few movies have made me suffer so much by virtue of their style alone. (*France-Observateur*, April 5, 1956)

Remember the Alamo!: *The Last Command*

Frank Lloyd's film may not be one of those on which I usually confer the honor of a review, but I will admit that my choice is dictated, first of all, by the fact that *The Last Command* [1955] is the sole movie I saw in Paris last week. So it's Lloyd or nothing! However, I would have chosen silence if this picture had not had qualities that at least deserved a little comment. I think that unless you are completely insensitive to the traditional and commercial genre of the patriotic para-western, you will get some pleasure out of going to see *The Last Command* if the film comes anywhere near your neighborhood.

In any event, the work of a veteran like Lloyd deserves *a priori* some attention. The fact that he has directed a B-level production clearly unworthy of his abilities and his experience does not diminish the charm of *The Last Command*—on the contrary. Though it is probable that the Frank Lloyd of *Mutiny on the Bounty* [1935] and *Cavalcade* [1933] would appear to be somewhat outdated today, his anachronistic eloquence finds a contemporary charm here only somewhat tinted with parody by the inadequacy of his cinematic means.

Moving Deaths

I'd like now to point out to prospective viewers a very safe way to distract themselves during the movie: have fun by discovering the detail that sticks out in a shot with three or four points of interest. For example, the rubber bayonets in the back of the frame during furious assaults (those in the foreground are "hard"), or the dead men who move. There is one shot, remarkable after a battle around a stream, where the corpse of a Mexican soldier is seen drifting, but, if you pay attention, from time to time you will see the stiff body kick back a bit so

that it can precipitously remain on the surface of the water. *The Last Command* even provides an astonishing illustration of the decadence of “dangerous” accounting in Hollywood cinema. The stuntmen, probably very well unionized, visibly limit the possible physical damage, imposing the practice of using the most harmless techniques in situations that would otherwise be pricey according to their catalogue.

The falls from horses, in particular, obviously contradict the assumption on our part of serious injury or even death, because here the wounded rider slides straight back and all the way off the animal. I could measure the improbability of such a careful technique by comparing it with the kind I found in an Argentine “western” at the Cannes Film Festival. In this South American country, where cinema and, *a fortiori*, the genre in question do not yet have a tradition, the director always refers back to reality. Moreover, in the homeland of the *gauchos* one knows what it is to ride and to fall; the “falls” in *The Last Command*, by contrast, would make the Argentines laugh out loud.

But I do not want to give the reader the impression that Frank Lloyd’s film, for all these reasons, is ridiculous. On the contrary, *The Last Command*’s inadequacies—doubtless half intentional, for they could not escape such an experienced eye as Lloyd’s—render the result strangely moving. Indeed, in the same sequence that contains shots where we spot unbelievable technical failures (I did not say tricks or deceptions, like a painted canvas), we find shots that will take your breath away with their amazingly spectacular realism. When the mastery of the director is as apparent as this, then we are not obliged to snooze through the rest of the scenario.

Scenario and Interpretation

About this scenario it is time to say a few words. *The Last Command* takes place in the mid-1830s in Texas, whose patriots are in rebellion against the authority of the Mexican government. The first phase of the insufficiently prepared resistance will be crushed by the Mexican army, under the leadership of Antonio López de Santa Ana—an army that is far superior in number to the group gathered at the Alamo, where Davy

Crockett, the famous frontiersman and soldier, will die in the end with all the other defenders of the fort.

Nevertheless, *The Last Command* is appealing not so much because of the spectacular aspect of its *mise-en-scène*—particularly during the Battle of the Alamo [1836]—as because of the unusual quality of its acting. In the first place, the cast features remarkable variety: it includes Sterling Hayden [as Jim Bowie], Ernest Borgnine, and Richard Carlson [as William Barret Travis]. On the female side, we are delighted to find Anna Maria Alberghetti's touching and beautiful face, which I do not remember having seen since her role in Gian Carlo Menotti's *The Medium* [1951]. But the exceptional variety of this cast is underlined and deepened by much stronger directing of the actors than is common in a genre where character psychology remains mostly conventional, hence superficial. I will mention in particular the astonishing performance of J. Carrol Naish in the role of General Santa Ana: very convincing, indeed! (*France-Observateur*, May 31, 1956)

Two Films with Social Subjects: *The Man with the Golden Arm* & *I'll Cry Tomorrow*

I have previously pointed out, in connection with films on juvenile delinquency or para-criminality, the proliferation of “social” subjects in American cinema. I have also noted that this current trend is undoubtedly a paradoxical consequence of CinemaScope and color, for the development of spectacular productions engendered a reaction on the part of certain directors, whose first focus in their films then became, not the visuals, but the audacity or the originality of the subject itself.

This is Otto Preminger’s focus in *The Man with the Golden Arm* [1955], a movie about drugs, whose ravages in the United States appear to be increasingly alarming. However, it should be made known that the evocation of such a medico-social reality has so far been one of the taboos of Hollywood. Still, American cinema is better off than French cinema in this regard: it is not subject to any legal censorship, but that is because the American cinema submits to corporate censorship as exercised by the association of major producers. This censorship has a code (the famous Hays-Johnston Motion Picture Production Code [1930-68]) listing a number of themes, situations, and images to be avoided in filmmaking. Alcoholism is allowed but, up to now, drugs have been prohibited.

Preminger went astray by taking as the subject of his latest film the story of a man whose environment and certain conjunctures in his private life led to drug addiction. A first detoxification undergone in a prison clinic could perhaps definitively wrest him from his passion if his wife, a hysteric who feigns paralysis, did not try to prevent her husband from succeeding in his new job as a jazz drummer in order to keep him

around all the time. Forced to earn his living as a card dealer in a nearby gambling den, the man will fall back into his vice. This time it will be the love of another woman, patient and caring, that will save the addict by helping him to endure the terrible ordeal of a second detoxification—without medical assistance.

We can see from the above summary that Otto Preminger attacked his subject head-on. The censors therefore refused him the imprimatur that he had done his job well. [Presciently, Preminger decided to release the finished film prior to submitting it for a seal of approval from the Motion Picture Production Code, and United Artists, which had invested \$1 million in the movie's production, opted to distribute it. In late 1955, the Production Code Authority denied *The Man with the Golden Arm* a seal, but, ultimately, the Motion Picture Association of America examined and revised the Production Code, allowing subsequent films more freedom to explore in depth hitherto taboo subjects such as drug abuse, kidnapping, miscegenation, abortion, and prostitution. In the end, *The Man with the Golden Arm* finally received the seal of the Production Code in June 1961, which permitted the picture to be reissued and sold for television broadcast.] Nonetheless, *The Man with the Golden Arm* has been successful in America, and everything suggests that it will have success overseas as well.

Otto Preminger is one of Hollywood's best directors; his recent work includes the screen version of *The Moon Is Blue* [1953, taken from F. Hugh Herbert's 1951 play of the same name] and his much admired "Negro" version of Mérimée's and Bizet's *Carmen* [*Carmen Jones*, 1954], which has been withheld from the French public on the silly ground that "respect for revered French works" must be maintained. *The Man with the Golden Arm* itself certainly counts among Preminger's best films, if not the best.

Not that *The Man with the Golden Arm* is flawless. I do not particularly like the opposition drawn between the two female characters, which is a little too facilely melodramatic and Manichaeistic for my taste. The character of the Mephistophelian drug dealer is hardly more admissible in a picture whose realism, in other ways, is so effective.

But these weaknesses can be ignored thanks to the admirable verisimilitude and powerful originality of the main character, wonderfully interpreted by Frank Sinatra. Almost always on the screen, he is the linchpin of the film, in which Preminger has interested us not so much because of the picturesque morbidity of this particular vice as because of the drama of will and conscience against an inner demon. It would not be too much to say that we perpetually feel the soul of the protagonist, which is tragically chained to organic fatalities from which it will finally deliver itself only after a veritable descent into the underworld.

How much less convincing is the performance of Susan Hayward in *I'll Cry Tomorrow* [1955, Daniel Mann], whose theme is quite comparable to that of *The Man with the Golden Arm* in that the passion in question here is classic alcoholism. In this particular field, however, precedents are not lacking, the most famous one being *Lost Weekend* [1945, Billy Wilder]. *I'll Cry Tomorrow* is adapted from the 1954 confessional autobiography of the same name by Lillian Roth, a celebrated singer and actress who lost her career to drink yet later managed to escape her vice thanks, in particular, to the help of a typically Anglo-Saxon type of association [Alcoholics Anonymous] where former alcoholics charitably assist their brothers and sisters in need. The main thrust of this organization's moral therapy mixes a vague Protestant religiosity with no less vague Freudian postulates: public confession, for example, is considered the necessary first step towards salvation. The whole business becomes the subject of irony in the last part of the film, which for me is not the part that deserves the most criticism.

Such rehabilitation practices have been treated, without undercutting or mockery, in other movies: *Something to Live For* [1952, George Stevens] and *Come Back, Little Sheba* [1952, Daniel Mann] come to mind. Here, though, almost the entire picture lacks credibility in spite of the theoretical likelihood of the situations depicted. It may even be that the script of *I'll Cry Tomorrow* is better in its details than that of *The Man with the Golden Arm*. The truth of its literary source, moreover, should have been a kind of guarantee. But this is precisely

what makes it possible to measure the contribution of the film's *mise-en-scène*, not merely as a form of narrative or dramatic continuity, but as the creation of the living body of the work. Otto Preminger, in spite of some improbabilities in his scenario, makes us believe his character, makes us participate in this man's drama from the inside, without engaging in psychological analysis. Daniel Mann, by contrast, simply photographs a reality reconstituted from the outside.

Ironically, Preminger was a member of the jury at the 1955 Cannes Film Festival, which gave Susan Hayward the Best Actress Award for *I'll Cry Tomorrow*. I want to believe that only the gallantry of the jury can explain and excuse the giving of such a prize to this American actress—who had to be thanked, no less, for remaining at the Festival from beginning to end! (*L'Éducation nationale*, June 21, 1956)

Fool's Gold or Precious Metal?: *The Gold Rush* Reconsidered

I will take advantage of this relatively slow summer week (for quality if not quantity) to return to a re-release whose importance had obviously not escaped me, but about which I have had, so far, some reluctance to speak. It is not pleasant for me to admit that I was originally a little disappointed by *The Gold Rush* [1925/1942]. Yet I do not remember having seen Charlie Chaplin's film (which was given a musical score and sound narration [by Chaplin] upon its re-issue in 1942) when it was first released in France after the war. This is no doubt because the dearth of films during the Occupation initially made us a little less demanding about what we saw. I now believe, however, that, more than anything else, the recent revivals of *City Lights* [1931/1950] and *Modern Times* [1936/1954] have put *The Gold Rush* back in its true place, something it is not often afforded: first.

Let me immediately declare that my reservations about this picture are inseparable from my admiration for Chaplin's work in general. For me, this is where any analysis must begin. Moreover, it goes without saying that the possibility of commercially releasing (for the third time) a thirty-one-year-old movie like *The Gold Rush* is already sufficient proof of its extraordinary qualities. A lot has already been said about the exceptional classicism of Chaplin's silent comedy, so I will intentionally leave this aspect of his wondrous achievement out of my discussion today.

Two Types of Gags

The Gold Rush certainly illustrates the perfection of Chaplinesque style in both the economy of the Tramp's bodily expression and the economy of the film's scenario. The soberness of this work attains the level of the sublime without ever petering out, and without attenuating a comic inspiration that always emanates from the burlesque. The meal of the boiled shoe, the cabin balanced on a precipice ... these are gags that could have appeared in any reel of a Keystone or Mutual picture. But here they are treated, if I may say so, with grotesque delicacy, or delicacy in enormity. The farce is stripped of its roughness, that is, without ever losing its potency. The height of simplicity simultaneously becomes, in this case, the height of art.

I'd like to note in passing that such infallible economy of expression leads Chaplin to employ two types of gags that are exact opposites. In the first instance, the comic effect is somehow prompt, or full of suspense as soon as it starts. Such is the case, for example, with the gag that opens *The Gold Rush*. Unbeknownst to him, the Tramp is being followed by a huge bear. Suspense! But at the first crossroads, the bear takes a different path. The structure of this gag is similar to another immediately suspenseful one of Chaplin's that appears in his published short story titled "Rhythm: A Story of Men in Macabre Movement" [*Script*, Jan. 1938]. In this particular gag a condemned soldier is about to be shot. The officer in charge has just ordered "Ready, aim, ..." A rider bearing a message of reprieve then appears; the officer sees him and yells "Stop!"; yet, uncomprehending, the members of the firing squad go ahead, in rhythm, and shoot. As it unfolds in two or three stages, the gag of the boiled shoe, for its part, partakes, in its "promptness," of a similar soberness or economy. Chaplin, for example, is careful not to show us any scenes related to the desperate decision to eat the boiled shoe. The reason is that the spectator can already visualize them from what he knows and what he sees; these scenes would only be redundant here. On the other hand, the Tramp's sucking on shoe-nails as if they were chicken bones—well, such an action opens up the most dizzying perspective on what I am going to call the imagination of absence.

In contrast to these comic *haiku*, the fruit of a supreme concentration of meaning comparable to the effect created by the focal point of a concave mirror, Chaplin's second type of gag—in which he equally excels—is the linear or sequential exhaustion of a dramatic situation. Such is the case with the gag of the cabin in unstable equilibrium on the edge of the precipice. It is an extended gag that produces endless variations, be they expected or surprising. Using this type of gag, Chaplin, in my view, never did anything better than the extraordinary sequence in *The Circus* [1928] where he inadvertently locks himself inside the lion's cage. Yet in this sequence as well as the cabin-gag from *The Gold Rush*, economy and rigor continue to be equally important. In *The Circus*, the meaning goes directly from the periphery to the center, and in *The Gold Rush*, the comic energy contained in the initial premise is never lost: Chaplin never does too much, but he doesn't do too little, either.

The Sadness at the Heart of Laughter

Sadness at the heart of laughter: it is certain that, with *The Gold Rush*, Chaplin perfectly expressed this emotion. What has made the exceptional reputation of the film, more than its formal perfection, is precisely the ambiguity of its effect—and of its meaning. Certainly, moral gravity and a certain tragic, even bitter, quality were not absent from several previous films of Chaplin's: *The Kid* [1921], for one. But it can be said that, for the first time in *The Gold Rush*, unmoored or gratuitous comedy is totally absent. The obvious ambition of Chaplin here is to make us laugh against a background of sadness, which is Alfred de Musset's famous description of Molière's own ambition in his plays. What's especially admirable, however, is that Chaplin never sacrifices the purely visual requirements of situations and gags, their intrinsic cinematic logic, to the thematic significance these situations and gags generate. In other words, the event is never the illustration of an idea: the event always has impact or importance in itself; its art proceeds in the first place from its fullness, its physicality, as an event.

Why, then, do I feel the disappointment to which I referred in my first paragraph above? Because the implied meaning in *The Gold*

Rush is as much *psychological* as it is moral. The feeling that such a comedy engenders entails emotion: pity on the little man. The protagonist here comes, in Chaplin's *oeuvre*, at the end of a process, if not of individualization, at least of personalization as suggested in several previous Chaplin films—but this time the personalization fills the whole screen. In the Charlie of *The Pilgrim* [1923] and *The Kid*, there was still more than a trace of depersonalizing cruelty. There are no such traces in *The Gold Rush*, for the Tramp has become a sympathetic victim. Remember, it was after seeing this picture that the poet and critic André Suarès talked about the “ignoble heart” of Chaplin. [Suarès's “Le Coeur ignoble de Charlot” appeared in *Comœdia*, a Paris newspaper, on July 3, 1926.] “Ignoble” is too strong a term, for something that affects the dignity of artistic design cannot be accused of ignominy; but “heart” is just right, and if any doubt remains, Chaplin's own commentary [in the 1942 re-release] now exists to prove it.

Chaplin Dominates the History of Cinema

It will be said, though, that the Tramp does not suffer any less from adversity in the pictures that follow *The Gold Rush*, and in them Chaplin still requires the audience's sympathy for his hero. This is true, but it seems to me that what we have been witnessing, from *City Lights* forward, is a reverse intellectualization of the character—a phenomenon that surely is due in part to the significance of *Modern Times*, a superior thesis film that, unlike *The Gold Rush*, is no longer a work of sentiment. One therefore often hears Chaplin reproached, with the proper rhetorical deference, for having pretended to make thoughtful movies. Yet this view of matters seems to me to be contradicted by the films themselves, and, for me, the beauties in them remain in spite of any ideas that may or may not be present. In short, Chaplin's *oeuvre* could be divided, before and after *The Gold Rush*, according to a process that brings his screen character into schematic focus as he moves from being a creature of burlesque to becoming a psychologized figure that arouses empathy and pity. In the future, Chaplin's work would no doubt be consigned to the heap of decadence had it not been saved by a certain intellectual ambition—on his part as well as that of his critics—that,

little by little, restored to the Tramp an existence no longer “pre-” but post-psychological.

If viewed symmetrically around the sentimental axis of *The Gold Rush*, the films of Charles Chaplin reveal the gradual conceptualization of the incipiently primitive personage of the Tramp until finally, with *Monsieur Verdoux* [1947], we get the defrocking of this figure once and for all. But the abominable Don Juan of *Making a Living* [1914], with his crooked mustache, had not yet anointed him! Thus one can discern in Chaplin’s evolution a kind of growth or progress, which could well account for the fact that one of the great screen artists, the author of both *The Pilgrim* and *Limelight* [1952], knew better than to statically submit to the history of the cinema: he opted instead to movingly dominate it! (*France-Observateur*, July 5, 1956)

The Bottom of the Bottle and the Sociology of American Cinema

Ah! If only all of *The Bottom of the Bottle* [1956, Henry Hathaway] were worth its first ten minutes! We are somewhere in the southwestern United States [Arizona], near the Mexican border. In a luxurious vehicle a man, whom the customs officers greet familiarly on both sides with the diminutive “P. M.,” crosses to Mexico and goes to the little town of Nogales. We follow him to a brothel, only to find him a few hours later on the way back to the U.S. in a tremendous storm. The rains, for which the drought-stricken region had been waiting for months, have finally decided to come. The cattle are saved! But the river quickly becomes a torrent. To reach his ranch, P. M., or Patrick Martin, has to cross a ford that has already been transformed into a series of rapids. Eventually, he gets home, where he knows that the flood will cut him off from the rest of the world as well as all the other ranchers nearby. Who cares, since P. M. has enough supplies to sit out this otherwise beneficent flood in comfort: the refrigerator is bulging with food and the whiskey cabinet is full.

P. M. is about to close the door to his garage when, in the red glow of his car’s tail lights, a silhouette appears. It is a man in rags, with a beard of two days and a revolver tucked into his belt: his name is Donald Martin. He is the younger brother of P. M., and he has just escaped from prison, where he still had to five years to go for killing a man in a barroom brawl. The once hard-drinking Donald is trying to take refuge here, with his elder sibling, so that he can clandestinely slip into Mexico [where his wife and two daughters, who are destitute, await him]—although he does not expect a very brotherly reception. P. M. left his

miserable childhood family as soon as he could, then later succeeded on his own as a lawyer and ranch-owner. The respect that he enjoys throughout the region is hardly worth risking, he feels, for the sake of complicity in the flight of an escaped convict.

Up to this point, the themes proposed by the scenario and *mise-en-scène* of *The Bottom of the Bottle* surprise and even captivate. We see constituted in brief, elliptical scenes an intrigue of classical proportions that is framed in an unusual, eye-catching way. We guess that the director, Henry Hathaway, will take advantage of the moral, fraternal conflict and its incubation in an artificial social environment suddenly closed off by natural events. Indeed, geographically speaking, the southwestern part of America—especially Arizona and New Mexico—makes for a classic *western* setting. The protagonists of this film are the successors of traditional cowboys, who by 1955 had become wealthy ranchers living in luxurious interiors and wearing, in the exercise of their profession, silk shirts topped off by neckscarfs. It is not that these men no longer ride on horseback; they do, but merely to explore the terrain on the other side of the road running in front of their houses. The rest of the time, each man's mount follows him in a trailer attached to a sporty Cadillac or a stately Mercedes-Benz.

Stranger and more disturbing still is the sociology of this rural aristocracy, which, one must not forget, may be found in the southeastern as well as the southwestern United States. Obviously, Hathaway has devoted all his efforts here to creating social realism at the expense of psychological truth, and one regrets this all the more because the dramatic particulars of the scenario—adapted from the 1949 novel of the same name [*Le Fond de la Bouteille*] by Georges Simenon—did not in any way call for such a sacrifice. Nevertheless, I would like to use the matter of sociology to compare *The Bottom of the Bottle* with two other recent films of dissimilar genre. I'm thinking of *It's Always Fair Weather* [1955, Gene Kelly & Stanley Donen] and *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* [1956, Nunnally Johnson], which has not yet been released in France but whose presentation at the 1956 Cannes Festival authorizes me to write about it.

In fact, I find in these three movies a common, dominant theme: the conflict between societal success and self-esteem. In *The Bottle of the Bottle*, P. M. (performed by Joseph Cotten), reversing the experience of the prodigal brother, owes his enviable position and the respect of his fellow citizens to the repudiation of his childhood misery. Yet P. M.'s economic success has not given him real happiness and especially not domestic content. If he goes to a brothel every Saturday night, it is because for years his wife, with whom he refuses to have a child, sleeps in a room apart from him. Naturally, it is she who will make him understand that their happiness has been destroyed by his selfishness and, above all, by his ambition. Let him dare to help his brother at the expense of his career, even his fortune and his freedom, and happiness will be born again by virtue of love, which cannot bear fruit if one does not first love oneself.

This would be only a naïve moral or ethical theme without much originality if not for its social implications, which clearly reflect a contemporary anguish in American society. It is also highly significant that we find such a theme, not just in a serious picture like *The Bottom of the Bottle*, but also in the comic mode in *It's Always Fair Weather*—particularly as stylized by the dance choreography of Gene Kelly. If comedy has always been the privileged mode of expression for American myths, this is doubly so in the case of Kelly's musical comedies.

To Be or Not to Be ... a Bastard

What is the subject of *It's Always Fair Weather*? During the Second World War, three friends cultivated a virile, affectionate friendship, which they believed to be immortal. To prove it to themselves, they meet ten years later. The fact that they meet at the appointed time and day augurs well for the fidelity of their friendship, yet it is clear, very quickly, that they have nothing more to say. It is not so much life that has separated them as boredom and the near contempt they now feel for one another. These sentiments are then admirably analyzed, in dance and song, by Gene Kelly (playing Ted Riley, one of the three friends), so that we may discover the moral truth of, or underlying reasons for, the friends' disillusionment.

I quote now from the lyrics to Kelly's song "I Like Myself," whose meaning—that you can't love others if you don't love yourself—echoes that of *The Bottom of the Bottle*:

Love has made me see things in a different way.

Can it be? I like myself.

She likes me, so I like myself.

...

Always used to dislike myself.

But now my love has got me riding high!

She likes me, so, so do I!

Each of the three friends finally understands that financial success is not the first thing in life: that is to say, that the lure of social esteem must not be allowed to extinguish the morality of self-esteem, of individual happiness—in other words, love.

The sole interest of *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, like that of *It's Always Fair Weather* and *The Bottom of the Bottle*, is sociological. A "producer's film" *par excellence*, this is a rather startling social psychoanalysis of the American public relations man considered as the potential epitome of business success. It is instructive to compare *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, in this regard, with *The Big Knife* [1955, Robert Aldrich], a "director's film" whose major theme, incidentally, is also the conflict between societal success and self-esteem. What is the use of achieving Hollywood renown, says *The Big Knife*, if it is necessary simultaneously to lose one's soul? But in *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, as produced by Darryl F. Zanuck, the hero's situation is more subtle. Gregory Peck, in the role of Tom Rath, succeeds in escaping his dilemma by daring to confront, on the one hand, the possible vanity of the big boss and, on the other hand, the moral sensibility of his wife, who is reluctant to admit what her husband knows: that the diplomacy he has used in dealing with his superiors is in essence self-demeaning. The thesis of the picture, basically, is that with enough clear-sightedness, courage, and also prudence, one can get ahead in business without being a bastard.

To be or not to be a bastard: this is what seems to be, on the evidence of these three otherwise very different films, the great question that rises up these days from the depths of American economic happiness. That American cinema at least partly reflects such a theme is, of course, to its credit. Its doing so may even be something a little like the American Communist Party's implicit self-criticism through its recent attack on the novelist and screenwriter Howard Fast [who, after going to prison in 1950 for refusing to "name names" before the House Un-American Activities Committee, later broke with the Party over the issue of oppressive living conditions in the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellite states]. (*France-Observateur*, July 19, 1956)

Fritz Lang's *While the City Sleeps*: A Sleeper?

Among the great masters of European cinema who immigrated to America, Fritz Lang is probably the one who has suffered the most depreciation at the hands of the studio system—along with Josef von Sternberg, also condemned after the Hollywood Golden Age to making B-movies. As of 1945, with *Scarlet Street* (an adaptation of Jean Renoir's *La Chienne* [*The Bitch*, 1931]), Lang seemed to have only the possibility of turning out little crime thrillers without ambition and without means, at least as far as the material criteria of film production are concerned. He has obviously made a long descent, then, from *You Only Live Once* [1937] down to *The Blue Gardenia* [1953]. Even *Human Desire* [1954], despite the relative ambition of its screenplay, was merely a remake (of Renoir's *The Human Beast* [1938]) in black and white at a time when color had become an outward sign of a project's high standing. From this point of view, alas, Lang has never stooped so low as in *While the City Sleeps* [1956], a SuperScope picture (that is, on a screen almost as wide as that of CinemaScope) nevertheless also shot in black and white.

At first glance, the scenario of this film does not contradict the impression of aesthetic poverty given by its images. Indeed, we find ourselves on the same level here as in a B-series psychological crime drama. A sadistic, neurotic killer attacks and strangles young women in New York after introducing himself as the delivery boy from the neighborhood drugstore. An allusion to his mother written with lipstick on bathroom walls makes it possible to guess that the youthful criminal has not rid himself very well of his Oedipus complex. So we find

ourselves, at once, amidst the worst clichés of the Hollywood *noir* jumble, with the additional aggravating circumstance of obvious references to Lang's own *M* [1931], which make us fear that the unfortunate director has been reduced in *While the City Sleeps* to caricaturing himself.

Then, quite quickly, this police procedural introduces us to a second plot that takes place inside a large media organization. With the death of the big boss of the company, his incompetent, cynical son has decided to divide and conquer. Knowing that he himself is incapable of running the business, he wants to appoint an executive director chosen from among the heads of his three departments—the news division, the wire service, and the television network. But, in order to keep the trio of men completely at his mercy, he creates a sickening competition among them to see who can be the first to score an exclusive story on the serial killer terrorizing Manhattan's females; the winner becomes Executive Director of Kyne, Inc. Naturally, and in accordance with the traditional pattern, a journalist will turn detective and aid the failing police. In this case, the amateur detective is a brilliant writer-reporter who has previously won the Pulitzer Prize. One of his competitors, a woman, is the Carmen Tessier [famous French investigative journalist, 1911-80] of the house. Lang's den of vipers appears at first to be composed according to a socio-zoology as crude as the criminal psychology we saw at the start, and for the first thirty or forty minutes of *While the City Sleeps* I believed that such categorizing could only be the most pitiable of commercial concessions.

The very excess in this instance, however, should have warned me that there was no need for such a belief on my part, as Fritz Lang's real intentions were clearly unmasked in the second half of the picture. First, the criminal intrigue is virtually abandoned, after which there can no longer be any doubt that this faux *film noir* is actually a satirical comedy about journalism and, more generally still, about infighting within major American corporations. The utter coarseness of the dramatic situations, which are primitively simplistic as well, evidently proceeds from a parodic will, at the very least an implicit one. But within the two frameworks—the criminal pursuit and the journalistic

competition—which are all the more ponderous because they are doubly formulaic, Lang’s characters regain a newfound freedom that becomes very appealing as soon as we have grasped the peculiar bias of the director. For if we were to take *While the City Sleeps* solely on appearances, there would be no reason why the main actors’ performances should be so wonderfully liberated and comical, so precise in their excess, so unexpected given the set of conventions within which the film is operating. In fact, this is a kind of crime *farce* where fierce humor is used as a cover for the worst clichés of B-movie production.

Hear me out. I’m not going to say that Fritz Lang deliberately chose to make a film parody, that the parody in this case is fully calculated. Nor would I go so far as to argue that *While the City Sleeps* is a masterpiece containing an implicit, as well as important, message. Indeed, it is quite possible that Lang originally had only the intention of turning out yet another bad B-picture about criminals and cutthroats. But, first and foremost, I do believe that what I saw there on the screen is in fact there, and that, even when he is reduced to working with scant means or idiotic stories, Lang can create something of substance. I am not saying anything more—or anything less. (*France-Observateur*, August 16, 1956)

Flim-Flam or Film-Flannel?: *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*

This is undoubtedly the perfect example of the American “producer’s film.” We know what role such a figure plays in Hollywood, which is not comparable to that of his French namesake, who plays hardly anything other than an administrative and accounting role. In America, the producer, at least as typically conceived, has much more artistic initiative. He appears as the prime contractor of a motion picture, and the director then becomes only the chief functionary among all the performers. My purpose would not normally be to discuss the comparative merits of “producers’ cinema,” since the reader knows what my preferences are. But *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* [1956, Nunnally Johnson] offers too much opportunity to analyze some of the characteristics of a film visibly stemming from the will of a Hollywood producer, in this instance Darryl F. Zanuck.

First of all, it goes without saying that such a movie will be one where the script takes on more importance than the staging. Naturally, I mean by staging, or *mise-en-scène*, what gives the picture a personal style and not the spectacular scale that often signals the influence of a producer. Its scenario will therefore be ambitious, at least pretentious, and contain a bit of a thesis. But what doubles its interest and its value as an example is that the lesson of social morality involved seems, at the same time, to ideally express the American Way of Life as practiced by the middle and upper-middle classes—that is to say, precisely the social class of which the producer is a part and often the one into which he was born, or at least the one with which he is in constant working contact.

A Character of Medium Importance

The hero of *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, Tom Rath, as incarnated by Gregory Peck, is indeed a typical example of a middle-class bureaucrat or administrator, though in this case one working at the start for a non-profit organization. He may have a charming wife and three lovely children, but his salary is not good enough, his car is somewhat outdated, and the family home [in suburban Connecticut] is too small. This quietly desperate situation is not such that Tom doesn't want to improve it. He is a levelheaded yet energetic man who knows what he is worth. Suddenly an opportunity arises in the form of a vacant post in public relations at a major, New York television network. After a long discussion with his wife, Tom applies for the job and obtains it, even though he refuses to write his autobiography or take any psychological tests as part of the interview process. The new position involves being part of the brain trust of the TV network: in short, being the speechwriter for the president as he launches one or another national campaign.

The problem resides in the subordinate role played by Tom Rath, whose initiative and opinion run up against the cold, conventional authority of his immediate supervisor, who treats him as a simple scribe. A conflict soon arises between them about the composition of a speech on mental health that the network president himself must deliver before an audience of prominent doctors. Tom, who is sure he is right about the speech's content, risks compromising his position by persisting. It would perhaps be better to desist and yield, provisionally at least, to the silly writing instructions that the supervisor tries to impose on him. Even Tom's wife, Betsy (Jennifer Jones), accuses him of imprudence if not hypocrisy, going so far as to imply that his self-esteem now seems to depend on the frankness with which he will conduct himself in this affair.

It is appropriate at this point to introduce the president of the fictional UBC television network in *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*: Ralph Hopkins, a great businessman as embodied by Fredric March, yet one who is physically and morally worn out by his very success. Even as the above-mentioned events unfold, this particular chairman of the

board is very concerned about his daughter, who has left college for the nightclub scene and threatens to marry under less-than-ideal conditions. Ralph's own wife—from whom he has long lived apart—reproaches him for being more concerned, in general, with business matters than with the welfare of their child.

A Smart Boss

Tom Rath, for his part, opts to double down on his sincerity (or quit), daring to seize upon an opportunity to tell Hopkins what he thinks of the suggested changes to the speech. Tom's frankness succeeds with this smart man, who is probably more vulnerable at the moment on account of his personal worries. But now it's Tom's turn to have some private troubles. An affair with a young Roman woman whom he knew during the Italian campaign, on the eve of his embarkation for the Pacific War, produced a child—a circumstance that an honest man cannot ignore. Until this point, however, Tom had been ignorant of what became of Maria Montagne (Marisa Pavan), whom he left, eleven or twelve years earlier, in a pregnant state. A comrade from the war, Sgt. Caesar Gardella (Keenan Wynn), reveals the truth to his former captain: Maria currently lives in economic misery with her and Tom's son.

With the various sermons of his wife still echoing in his ears, Tom Rath decides to confess to her the truth about this old adventure (which occurred before their marriage). But, mad with pain at what she hears, Betsy Rath flees by car into the night. In the morning she returns, still in pain though now calm, and decides to give her husband supreme proof of her love: she goes to a local judge and asks him to set up a trust fund for Tom's son in Italy—a fund that will guarantee the boy and his mother an allotment of \$100 a month (the average standard of living for an Italian family at the time). Shortly thereafter, Tom, who earlier had brilliantly won over the confidence of his boss, refuses to accompany him on a lecture tour to California, so as not to desert his wife at such a delicate moment. At first furious, Ralph Hopkins acknowledges that Tom is right not to sacrifice his family happiness to professional success, as Ralph himself did, and decides to retain him in his public relations position at the UBC network.

The Theme of Socio-Economic Success

The above, very long plot summary, even if pruned somewhat (in particular concerning a matter of inheritance), was perhaps necessary to show, first of all, the relative complexity of this narrative (complexity that never comes at the expense of clarity and unity of action). It was also necessary to make clear that the film's social aspect lives through its psychological drama, something that connects *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* with *The Best Years of Our Lives* [1946, William Wyler]. Is this not, after all, much the same subject (reduced to one man rather than the three ex-servicemen of Wyler's picture) transposed to a later time—a decade later, in fact?

I wanted, through my extended summary, to reveal the nature of the relationship between the characters and their psychological or personal motives. As complex as the plot of *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* is, it revolves around a single theme, which the two male protagonists, Tom Rath and Ralph Hopkins, clearly illustrate: that of financial success in bourgeois American society, or, rather, how it can come into conflict with personal dignity and private happiness, two states that are closely dependent. Let me be more precise. It is remarkable that the character of Tom is not in any way tarnished or debased by this narrative; he is not, and he will never be—no matter what he does—a mediocrity or a failure, like Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman* [1951, Laszlo Benedek]. Moreover, the subject of *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* is absolutely not satirical. Nor is it a question of taking the side of an intelligent subordinate like Tom against a tyrannical boss, for the capitalist system itself is not in question here.

The sacrifice of self-respect demanded of Tom Rath is, basically, nothing out of the ordinary; it is relatively minimal, and an intelligent man, sure of himself, could accept this sacrifice without any great loss. Yet the hero of *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* bemusedly feels that he should *not* accept it and that his submission would mean much more: the waste of a certain essential or inner treasure for which subsequent professional, material benefits could not compensate. Already, we had seen him deliberately refuse to submit to any ridiculous psychological

examination, even if his being hired hinged upon it. A man worthy of the position for which he was applying could not agree to be reduced, in such a way, to a grid of psychological components. Conversely, we see in the Fredric March character the example of someone who, unlike Tom, has probably not respected this invisible threshold of consciousness, and who will pay for it in old age with unhappiness.

A Like Malady Found in Other Films

Indeed, the anxiety or agitation that Tom Rath experiences is not radically new: it was, in the comic mode, the driving force of Frank Capra's films from the 1930s and 1940s. But it was limited there to an argument in favor of goodness and fantasy over a world of mechanical harshness. The form in which we find such anxiety or agitation today testifies to an interesting maturation and evolution—one that, not by coincidence, affects various kinds of straight drama, even tragedy. Thus, in effect, when the Jack Palance character [Charlie Castle] dies in *The Big Knife* [1955, Robert Aldrich], is it not because of a fatal conflict similar to Tom's: the one between his professional renown and a certain self-esteem, without which he can no longer keep that of the woman he loves? And, perhaps in a broader yet not essentially different sense, would it not be the presentiment of a comparable malady that drives the adolescents of *Rebel Without a Cause* [1955, Nicholas Ray] to prove to one another—and to themselves—that they aren't necessarily like their compromised parents?

This interpretation will appear even less abstract if one wishes to refer to the contemporary American novel, in which existential anguish is the keystone of a whole literature. I am thinking of a work like *Appointment in Samarra* [1934], by John O'Hara, whose protagonist, Julian English, ended up being forced into suicide because it appeared to him forty-eight hours earlier that he could not in good conscience do anything other than throw a drink in the face of Harry Reilly, an investor in his business, a member of his country club, and someone who was paying too much attention to Julian's wife. This was a gratuitous yet necessary act, and a drunken gesture only to the extent that a little intoxication was necessary for the expression of total liberty.

A Less-than-Metaphysical Inquiry

Am I praising *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* in spite of my preliminary reservations? No, on the contrary! I just wanted to show the appeal of the movie and not its excellence. It is here that we must return to the producer. I do not know Mr. Zanuck personally, and I do not know anything about his life. Yet it seems evident to me that this picture, at the same time as it details a critical problem of American civilization, solves it typically in terms of class and sociology. In the eyes of the author-director [Nunnally Johnson, from the 1955 novel of the same name by Sloan Wilson], it is clear that Tom Rath and Ralph Hopkins, subjected to various temptations, resist them, avoid becoming “bastards” in the Sartrean sense of the word [a “bastard” being one who, in bad faith, tries to show that his existence is truly necessary, whereas, like everyone else’s existence, it is merely an accident of the appearance on earth of the human race], and keep their consciences clear.

In fact, however, the good conscience in which producer Zanuck, like his fictional protagonists, must believe if *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* is to be considered a great film, true and courageous, deep and human—this good conscience can be bought, and for merely \$100 a month! Such moral scruple is so sympathetic, in principle, that it finds its due resolution: courageous wives understand and forgive; the big boss is generous, with a network that pays; and even miserable little Europe earns a few dollars as part of the deal. All of this has a name, and it is called bourgeois Pharisaism. Although *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* is noteworthy, then, for its intentions and the clarity of its exposition, even, to a certain extent, for the sincerity of its purpose, it is nevertheless a dishonorable undertaking.

Still, it is the grandeur and often the beauty of contemporary American cinema that it appears obsessed with the dignity of being, with an unending quest for a reason to live in a certain kind of society. But the great films are naturally those that know how to achieve, through a social conjuncture that is also historically specific, a level of moral or metaphysical concern on which all men can agree. The limit of *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* is precisely that it encloses or contains

with a sociological framework an investigation that by its very nature is, or should be, metaphysical. This is why its ending is optimistic, whereas that of *The Big Knife*, *Rebel Without a Cause*, or even *The Barefoot Contessa* [1954, Joseph L. Mankiewicz] could only be painful and tragic. Then again, these are “directors’ films,” which is all the explanation we require. (*France-Observateur*, October 4, 1956)

In Defense of Robert Aldrich's *Attack!*

For anyone who would maintain that Hollywood has nothing more to teach us or to reveal to us, the name of Robert Aldrich alone is proper rebuttal. Born in 1918, Aldrich has made eight films (since 1953) and has become his own producer. This independence is notoriously directed against the "great" Hollywood, which Aldrich may intend to prove that one can very well do without. The former assistant of Jean Renoir (on *The Southerner* [1945]) and Charlie Chaplin (on *Limelight* [1952]), he achieved professional fulfillment after a dozen years of Hollywood apprenticeship. Though still a young man, Aldrich therefore already possesses the technical, administrative, and artistic experience to have a long and estimable career.

Remarkably, no matter how ruthless Robert Aldrich is toward Hollywood, it is in Hollywood that he intends to stay. I mean that he wants to prove that there is room for freedom of enterprise and creation in the capital of American cinema, and that he is opposed to the flight of some of the best directors (like Orson Welles) or to the capitulation of others (like Joseph L. Mankiewicz) in the face of Hollywood pressures. He explained all of this with a rather surprising frankness in a recent interview conducted by François Truffaut, which will appear in the next issue of *Cahiers du cinéma* [no. 64 (Nov. 1956): 2-II].

Seemingly only in vain, then, would Aldrich try to manifest his talent *despite* Hollywood. Both by training and ambition, the director of *The Big Knife* [1955] is a product of an American cinema whose working conditions he assumes, with clear-headedness and determination. It remains to be seen, however, whether the future will prove him right, whether his courage will show that there is a tomorrow for artists of his kind in Hollywood. Yet the situation created by television and

CinemaScope could justly restore the chances for an independent cinema that returns—by virtue not merely of circumstance, but also of intelligence and lucidity—to values of subject and style as opposed to those of size and spectacle, of color and the wide screen.

Not an Anti-Militarist Film

The Big Knife, the reader will remember, attacked a certain aspect of Hollywood; Aldrich's *Attack!* [1956] attacks the army. Such an idea is not absolutely original, since a number of American films (among them *From Here to Eternity* [1953, Fred Zinnemann] and *The Caine Mutiny* [1954, Edward Dmytryk]) have also criticized the military. Nevertheless, Robert Aldrich's movie must contain something more for the U.S. Army to have refused to grant the director's request for military cooperation and the use of certain specialized equipment. In fact, and although the works cited above are incredibly audacious compared to what the European (especially French) censors would allow, these pictures are not anti-militarist in nature. After all, criticism is part of the American tradition: from Americans' point of view, it should be optimistic and constructive, above all else. *Attack!* itself is not essentially anti-militarist. As we shall see, the true purpose of the film lies elsewhere; nonetheless, it remains constant and objective in its implication that the events denounced here could be repeated somewhere else in the future.

It is late 1944, and we are in a Belgian town near the front line during the Battle of the Bulge. A company called "Fragile Fox" is commanded by a cowardly and incapable captain, Erskine Cooney, who, by refusing to send reinforcements to Lieutenant Joe Costa's platoon—which is on a reconnaissance mission—causes the killing or wounding of a number of Costa's men. We learn that Captain Cooney owes his position only to the influence of his father, an important politician and a friend of the battalion commander, Colonel Clyde Bartlett, who intends to use the senior Cooney after the war to jumpstart his own political career. Costa declares his contempt for the captain, by radio, and assures him that if he should lose one more of his men to Cooney's cowardice, he will make sure that this officer never sees the United States again. Soon thereafter, Costa and his remaining men encounter further action

in the form of elements of the German SS [*Schutzstaffel*, or “Protection Squadron”]. The clash is intense and Costa must again request reinforcements—which are, once again, denied him by the captain. Though several of his men manage to escape, Costa sustains serious injury and is given up for dead.

Now dying yet praying to God for enough strength to avenge his comrades, Costa suddenly reappears at the abandoned house where Cooney and the rest of the unit are holed up; but the lieutenant collapses and dies at the captain’s feet. Cooney then decides, without need, to surrender what remains of his company to the Germans. It is at this point that the second lieutenant, Harry Woodruff, undertakes to execute what Costa could not: Woodruff shoots and kills Cooney. Right before the arrival of Colonel Bartlett, some of the witnesses to this little drama take turns shooting at Cooney’s body themselves, to assure the second lieutenant of their approval of, and complicity in, his action. Told by the men that Cooney was killed by the Germans, Bartlett—who has figured out that it wasn’t the enemy but the captain’s own men who killed him—puts Woodruff in command and gives him a field promotion to captain. Then Bartlett announces that he is going to nominate Cooney for the Distinguished Service Cross. Outraged, Woodruff accuses the colonel of proposing such an action just to gain favor with Cooney’s powerful father. Bartlett remarks that Woodruff has too much to lose if he makes the whole affair public, yet, as the movie ends, Woodruff is calling the commanding officer, General Parsons, on the radio precisely to file a full report about what has happened.

Like *The Big Knife*, *Attack!* is the adaptation of a play—in this instance, the 1954 drama *Fragile Fox*, by Norman Brooks—which obviously explains not only the preponderance of dialogue but also, through it, the essentially moral quality of the action. By moral, I also mean non-psychological, which is perhaps the reason for the misunderstandings that the film has provoked (and that it partially suffered at the Venice Festival, I believe, on account of its being subtitled solely in Italian). As in *The Big Knife* [whose moral drama concerns a successful Hollywood actor who longs to do more inspiring work than the schlock the studio offers him], Robert Aldrich is interested in

Attack! only in creating the semblance of psychological realism. The characters in this picture are chiefly incarnated, instead, in various states of *moral* consciousness, and the kinship is evident here between Joe Costa and Charlie Castle, the protagonist of *The Big Knife*: a kinship that is emphasized by the fact that Jack Palance plays both characters. Each represents a claim to moral purity in circumstances that otherwise seem to call for social compromise.

A Tragedy of Freedom

Thus formulated, the opposition between moral purity and social compromise is not original and could even pass for simplistic, but it is obviously the manner of its exhibition in this situation that gives it value. For there is in Robert Aldrich a profoundly modern sense of the moral drama of contemporary man—a drama that is undergirded by American sociology yet that transcends it. In his admirable *Kiss Me Deadly* [1955], I believe I saw a kind of police parable of the Atomic Age, but I know I see in *The Big Knife* and *Attack!* tragedies of freedom and dignity as they are threatened by the exploitation or repressiveness even of modern democracies. Aldrich, who is left-wing, is doubtless thinking here, metaphorically speaking, of McCarthyism and American commissions of anti-Communist inquiry, yet it would not be farfetched to transpose these particular dramas to other countries and imagine a Joe Costa or Charlie Castle of the Stalinist world.

In spite of some admirable sequences, *Attack!* may not be, in the end, as satisfactory as *The Big Knife*. Probably the theatrical source of the screenplay is a more difficult handicap to overcome in this war movie because of its inevitably spectacular aspects, whose alternation on screen with scenes of pure dialogue is sometimes artificial. The problem is also, I think, that the lyric *fortissimo* of Aldrich's interpretation is not always compatible with the sober and detailed realism called for in any evocation of military combat. The social background of *The Big Knife* made its excesses or artifices acceptable, if not plausible. It happens, in the case of *Attack!* given its context, that they detonate. But such relative reservations on my part cannot prevail against the intellectual and

formal beauties of Robert Aldrich's admirable—and therefore
eminently defensible—film. (*France-Observateur*, October 11, 1956)

Of Whales and Titans: *Moby Dick*, Melville, and Huston

That the 1956 film adapted by John Huston from *Moby Dick* [1851], Herman Melville's sublime masterpiece, is a failure—of this there can be little doubt, but that does not necessarily mean anything concrete about the picture's value and the merits of its director. For even if we take for granted the fact that the movie restores only a small part of the original poetry and that it does not manage to avoid the novel's tedium (despite the fact that it doesn't dare to transpose, with the same proportions, the monumental dimensions of the book), justice and reflection require that we measure, in addition to the difficulties of the whole undertaking, everything that Huston has nevertheless managed to achieve. Such that it is now necessary to pay the following considerable tribute to the director: he has not betrayed Melville's meaning.

In an 1851 letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne, the author of *Moby Dick* stated: "I have written a wicked book." John Huston himself has the right to say, "I have made a smart film." Keep in mind that what counts for us today in Melville's novel, which is both calculated and visionary, was not understood in his own time. Huston has at least tried to safeguard the essential: that is, the close intertwining, the indissoluble alliance, of the novel's events and their metaphysical symbolism. Of course, he did not do this, fortunately, by detaching such symbolism from its tangible moorings, or by reducing the action to a philosophical metaphor—which would have turned Melville's admirable parable into a bad thesis novel—but by preserving the symbolism's immanence and its ambiguities.

One can no longer ignore all that *Moby Dick* owes to what might be called a civilization of the Bible and, through it, to a whole implicit metaphysics, which, in a stroke of genius on Melville's part, remains at the level of image and analogy. Thus this tale of adventure becomes, through its very adventure, a veritable theological and moral enterprise. Moby Dick, the invincible white whale, is undoubtedly the eternal Leviathan with his mouth from hell, engulfing a humanity deep in sin; at the same time he is an instrument of divine justice, of which his immaculate whiteness shows itself to be worthy. As for Ahab, one can see in him what becomes of this new quest for the Holy Grail, a quest at once Luciferian and Promethean, demonic and mystical. John Huston, then, clearly saw that a valid adaptation of *Moby Dick* had to be realized simultaneously on the level of the narrative and the symbolic.

Naturally, it was necessary for obvious reasons to condense the novel: to simplify, often even to transform, and I do not think that, from such a point of view, one can ever accuse Huston, *in flagrante delicto*, of ignorance or betrayal. As co-scenarist, with Huston, Ray Bradbury (the world's best author of science fiction, whose novels are precisely a modern form of the fantastic Melvillian) has undoubtedly been an excellent collaborator, and I believe that one can admire almost every invention that the adaptors have dared to substitute for, or add to, the original. For example, when Ahab finds the point where the whaling ship *Pequod* must meet Moby Dick, we can see on the map that it is the Bikini Atoll [a nuclear test site from 1946 to 1958]. This is pure fancy on Huston's part, but perfectly in the prophetic spirit of the original work.

Similarly, at the end of the film, where the contingencies of invention are added to the other problems of adaptation, we find remarkable additions. I think of the corpse of Ahab—strung up by the very ropes harnessed to Moby Dick's body—whose lifeless arm seems, at each leap of the monster, to beckon his remaining crewmembers toward the chasm. The same goes for the reversal on the part of the chief mate, Starbuck, who, after having opposed throughout the film the fixation or obsession of his captain, suddenly takes on the legacy of the mad Ahab. This dramatically sudden turn of events is not in the book; yet nothing

precluded it, and one is pleased to think that Melville would have imagined it had he himself had to adapt his work to the screen.

Why, then, should we consider John Huston's movie to be a failure? Because, manifestly, his fidelity to Melville's intellectual meaning unfortunately failed, at the same time, to safeguard and transpose the romantic genius of the book. Long and elaborate, full of digressions, the novel of *Moby Dick* nonetheless more than makes up for its boring stretches. The film, however, captivates us solely in its introduction and its climax or denouement. And even the latter is handicapped by the obligation to resort to special effects that, no matter how skillful they may be, call too much attention to themselves. Between these two half-hour dramatic stretches, we get a long cinematic narrative whose lack of gripping episodes can only be compensated for by the fascination of Ahab's character.

On this point, moreover—the casting of Ahab—John Huston made a serious mistake. Gregory Peck is an Ahab without mystery: theatrical and superficial. But who could have filled the immensity of the character? Orson Welles, probably, whose too brief appearance at the beginning of picture [as Father Mapple] makes his absence even more cruelly regrettable. Huston's *Moby Dick*, though, is finally not unworthy of its source. While so many adapted films of literary masterpieces are little more than perfunctory plot summaries, the failure of this one owes nothing to oversimplification or stupidity. It deserved to be made—and to be reviewed.

I cannot conclude without an allusion to John Huston's experiment in the field of color. The critics were disappointed, and I confess that I am astonished at their severity. With a few exceptions, usually due to the special effects, the cinematographer Oswald Morris's stylization of color, created by the superimposition of black-and-white tones on a dominant, sepia print, gives a remarkable impression of "realistic unreality" that is well suited to the meaning of the work. From this perspective, *Moby Dick* marks an interesting stage in the evolution of color, whose recent history is already distinguished by several documentaries (among them *Picasso* [1955, Luciano Emmer] and *Night and Fog* [1956, Alain Resnais]). For Huston's *Moby Dick* tends to

reabsorb black and white, which thus ceases to oppose color and becomes instead a voluntary contributor to the illusion of photographic realism. Not bad! (*L'Éducation nationale*, December 13, 1956)

Notes on *The Solid Gold Cadillac*

I did not see the previous film by Richard Quine, *Pushover* [1954], for which one young critic had made quite a case. But *The Solid Gold Cadillac* [1956] does not seem to me to testify to a very original talent on the part of its director. This picture does not invalidate that talent, either, because one must be careful, in regard to American films, about determining the creative role of the director. For it is obvious that dozens of Hollywood directors would have shot this movie, on command, in precisely the same way. When it comes to second-rate productions, such virtual anonymity is perhaps more a strength than a weakness of American cinema.

Anyway, *The Solid Gold Cadillac* is a made-to-order film for Judy Holliday, an amazing actress who perfectly justifies the operation. If it is not on a level with her earlier work, particularly in George Cukor's *It Should Happen to You* [1954] and *Born Yesterday* [1950], this is mainly because the scenario is much less original. It looks like leftover Frank Capra, warmed up for the occasion. As evidence, I'll summarize the action.

A minority stockholder in a major corporation with just ten shares of stock, Laura Partridge (Judy Holliday) drives its arrogant, self-serving executives to distraction with her incessant questioning during shareholder meetings. The President and Chairman of the Board then comes up with the idea of hiring Laura as Director of Shareholder Relations, in order to keep her occupied by answering letters from small shareholders. As a result, Laura forges a warm relationship with many of these smaller investors; they respond and send in their proxies, giving her the right to vote on their behalf at meetings; and these votes get used to replace the entire Board. Finally, it is Laura Partridge who becomes

President and Chairman of the Board of Directors—in addition to marrying the previously ousted founder of the corporation and receiving the gift of a solid gold Cadillac.

On the big screen, some of the details of this film are funny, in particular the satirical aspect at the expense of American big business. I did not check whether *The Solid Gold Cadillac* was originally a play, but everything seems to indicate that it was: there are hardly any episodes that could not stand alone, unembellished, on a stage. [*The Solid Gold Cadillac* was in fact adapted from the 1953 play of the same name by George S. Kaufman and Howard Teichmann.] That is to say, the *mise-en-scène* is above all a matter of the distribution and direction, in one place, of all the other actors (they are excellent) in relationship to Judy Holliday—the center of attention as she talks non-stop. (*France-Observateur*, January 24, 1957)

Behind the Mirror, or *Bigger than Life*

I delayed by a week this review of Nicholas Ray's latest film because the critical encomia of his followers had given me some pause, and I wanted to see the picture again before revealing my reservations about the new release by such an otherwise appealing director. Admittedly, I feared that my first impression of *Bigger than Life* [1956] at the Venice Festival was correct, and I wish with all my heart that I had been wrong. Moreover, had I changed my mind about a festival judgment, it would not have been the first time. But I must now confirm that I find almost nothing in this movie other than the talent of Ray—at least what made me once love that talent. Hear me out! *Bigger than Life* is obviously not a negligible work, and I would advise my friends to see it anyway. I perceive, in fact, an intelligence, even a quality (that's not to say every quality), here that is well above average for American movies, and it goes without saying that I am not reducing Ray's scenario to the level of a medical melodrama.

We know, in fact, that the script of *Bigger than Life* is inspired by a true story about a man who suffered from a psychological disorder caused by the excessive use of cortisone. The film's protagonist, Ed Avery (played by James Mason), is a small-town, underpaid American teacher. Suddenly suffering from a serious and extremely rare disease [*polyarteritis nodosa*, an inflammation of the muscular arteries], he is quickly relieved of his pain by cortisone, a miracle drug still in its infancy, but whose dosage for the disease in question remains uncertain. Thus at the same time that cortisone gives Avery back his physical health, the heavy dosage has a side effect: it acts on his character by giving him a euphoric feeling of both authority and superiority.

As soon as he returns to his family from the hospital, our man indulges in sumptuous, reckless spending, then begins giving orders like a pasha, soon treats his wife as if she were a poor imbecile, and demands from his young son excessive effort at school. At the place where Avery himself teaches, he gives parents a terrifying speech about the congenital foolishness of children and the need to return to education through coercion. Then he decides to write a definitive book on education reform. Finally, madness really sets in and, apparently thinking of Abraham, Avery tries to sacrifice the life of his unworthy son. The straitjacket follows, after which he submits to a detoxification [followed by a reduced dosage of cortisone] that, happily, restores this fellow to his normal state: that of an educated, if harmless, petty bourgeois. Yet such an ending does not convince us by half and, with or without it, the lesson of the film remains.

The American Middle Class

This lesson is of both a social and moral order. Through the madness of his protagonist, Nicholas Ray conveys a rather critical, even cruel depiction of American society and its values. But the boldness and scope of his argument are beyond exaggeration. The failure of American liberal pedagogy has become so obvious that there must be more than one teacher who has discovered some truth in the theories of Alain [Émile Chartier (1868-1951), French teacher and philosopher]. It is true that the film's trick is to have these truths preached by a madman and to have them approved by the most stupid of his listeners. Yet, finally, Ray's deft ambiguity in the matter of education does not deserve any great cheers of admiration. For we must recognize, at the same time, that *Bigger than Life* as an acute documentary swindle: in this case, on the living conditions of the American middle class. The film's economic indicators are precise and useful, the décor is always tellingly significant, and ... But these are qualities common to many American movies, especially those of the last two years, and the relative novelty of this one lies solely in its portrayal of a rather unusual hero on the screen. Until now, we knew more about truck drivers and sales clerks.

More interesting to me is the moral scope of the script and its central character, and it is only through this element that I find some connection to the Nicholas Ray that I know. Considered as a moral fable, *Bigger than Life* is a kind of dramatic meditation on violence and intelligence, on the terrorism of truth gone mad.

The Film as Speech

I believe that I have honestly recognized *Bigger than Life*'s essential merit, which must always be cited in its favor. That's enough, I would say, to make an interesting movie. It would be more than enough to provide the material for a masterpiece, if I had found here, in addition, what I have so far admired in the director of *In a Lonely Place* [1950]. For it is certainly not intelligence or even lucidity that made *Rebel Without a Cause* [1955] such a prized picture! In its script, there was a naïveté or conventional facility that I happily do not find in *Bigger than Life*. But what, in *Rebel*, went to my heart and frayed my nerves was what, for want of anything better, I am going to call "human poetry." It was not James Dean's extended, nearly interminable physicalization—his "dance"—of his character that created this film's calculus; it was his sensitivity or, rather, his precision, which was of a musical kind, with its own inner rhythm. In short, *Rebel Without a Cause* was a song, and *Bigger than Life* seems to me like a speech.

I understand that the subjects are different and that there can also be a lyricism of prose, or, if you will, a penetrating prosaism. Yet I do not feel it in *Bigger than Life*, where, on the contrary, I am constantly embarrassed by the filmmaker's self-conscious artifice. A diabolically well-done scene like the one with the glass of milk is significant, it's true. Since, in this seemingly contented society, mental cruelty is one of the most characteristic modalities of suffering in a wife or husband, Nicholas Ray administers a dazzling, healthy demonstration of it here. The coldness of his calculation is too visible, however: the director did not know how to allow himself room to incorporate the unexpected, even a bit of nonchalance or complacency that would somehow keep him in check. Such control of all the details on Ray's part ends up, paradoxically, by destroying the credibility of the finished product.

[Bazin may also be referring here to Ray's use of widescreen cinematography to depict the interior spaces of this family drama, as opposed to the open vistas typically associated with the format, as well as his use of extreme close-ups in portraying the main character's psychosis and megalomania.]

I'll now make Nicholas Ray's fans rise up in anger, but I will dare to say that *Bigger than Life* finally makes me think of William Wyler. [In *Cahiers du cinéma* (no. 80 [Feb. 1958]), one such fan, Jean-Luc Godard, called *Bigger than Life* one of the ten best American sound films, and another, François Truffaut, praised the picture by noting the "intelligent, subtle" script, the "extraordinary precision" of Mason's performance, and the beauty of the movie's CinemaScope photography.] This comparison must be explained, naturally, given the difference in these directors' inspiration and history. I want only to say that if Ray were to continue in the manner of *Bigger than Life*, he would one day give us his own *Heiress* [1949, Wyler] or possibly a *Desperate Hours* [1955, Wyler]. Even if his subjects remained contemporary and therefore close to our sensibilities, Ray would finally apply the same analytical and cold dryness, the same closed-off intelligence, which knows how to expose a subject without getting beyond it.

We Remain Outside the Characters

I shall continue to believe in Nicholas Ray, because I think I can discern what in this whole business has distorted his talent and anesthetized his inspiration to a certain extent. To wit: *Bigger than Life* is an actor-producer's film rather than a director's. It was revealing that, during a press conference in Venice, James Mason spoke as if it were "his" picture and did not once utter the name of Ray. Mason had bought the rights to the story on which the script is based ["Ten Feet Tall," by Berton Roueché] and he produced the movie, because he saw in it a role for himself engraved in gold. Even if one is willing to admit that Ray introduced into this situation the maximum possible personal opportunity for himself, the artistic handicap still remained insurmountable.

Perhaps Nicholas Ray also made a mistake: an honorable one, yet no less serious. A film (no less than a novel or a play) cannot be built on a mediocre and unsympathetic hero. It is grandeur that saves, on stage or screen, Shakespeare's *Richard III* [1955, Laurence Olivier] or *Macbeth* [1948, Orson Welles]: grandeur and poetry! I've heard some supporters of *Bigger than Life* confess that they watched the movie with some amount of discomfort. The explanation for this seems clear to me: we do not know which character to sympathize with. Not with the protagonist, anyway! The woman and the child are left, but they function in a secondary role, in the background (perhaps to please the principal actor). We complain on their behalf without identifying them with them. Thus did I remain, from the beginning of the action to the end, outside the characters—a horrified but self-conscious spectator, and one particularly aware of the director's own self-consciousness. (*France-Observateur*, February 28, 1957)

Myths, Giants, and the Cinema: George Stevens' *Giant*

We were waiting, with both enthusiasm and curiosity, for the latest picture to be produced and directed by George Stevens. The final screen performance of James Dean and the exceptional ambition of *Giant* [1956], in subject and scope, justified our anticipation. But let me say it right away: this film is a disappointment, at least relative to what we had hoped for.

George Stevens has acquired a prominence in Hollywood that gives him the total freedom of directorial choice enjoyed only by the greatest filmmakers. Regarded, certainly, as a good director whose reputation had continued to increase, he nevertheless achieved a certain notoriety with *A Place in the Sun* [1951], adapted from Theodore Dreiser's novel *An American Tragedy* [1925]. Stevens was able to deploy at his ease here an insistent formalism, an almost bizarre taste both for framing effects and for interminable cross-fades, whose strangeness exuded an indisputable charm but which in the end were a little too heavy. These are the same limited qualities found in *Shane* [1953, from the 1946 novel by Jack Schaefer], a meta-western, which features a few too many beautiful symbols. In short, Stevens' past work placed him among the most estimable directors, yet it probably lacked the ultimate personal quality: a moral vision concerning people and things.

Be that as it may, *Giant* is obviously the most ambitious of George Stevens' productions to date. From a 1952 novel by Edna Ferber, the film lasts three hours and twenty minutes and could therefore claim to be a full novelistic adaptation, avoiding the "digest" side of such screen adaptations as *War and Peace* [1956, King Vidor, from the 1869

novel by Leo Tolstoy] and *Gone with the Wind* [1939, Victor Fleming, from the 1936 novel by Margaret Mitchell]—taken, as they are, from novels akin to rivers. Even as long and complex a movie as *Giant* could only offer a summary of Ferber's 400-page book, however. This material could easily have been condensed into ninety minutes had Stevens wanted to do it. In any case, it is not an abundance of incidents and characters that inflates the spectacle of this picture. For once, we simply get the impression that the director has taken his time and that the scenes last as long as he thought they needed to. Indeed, by such a standard, half the motion pictures currently in production should add an additional hour to their screen time.

The “Bestseller” Genre

Still, it is necessary that the grain ground by the majestic millstone of narrative be of a quality worthy of such an exceptional fate. I have not read the novel of *Giant*, but it is clear that it belongs to the genre of bestsellers as exemplified by *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* [1956, Nunnally Johnson, from the 1955 novel by Sloan Wilson], where an America beyond intelligent self-criticism confirms its vocation and the American Way of Life.

Giant tells the story of an American family in the quarter of a century from 1920 to 1945. In the first part of the narrative, Bick Benedict is the young and wealthy owner of one of Texas's largest ranches. From a trip to green and welcoming Maryland, he will bring back to Texas a charming bride and, moreover, one much more energetic and wise than her initial grace allows us to guess. Yet, although she sincerely embraces the harsh life of this rugged, almost desert-like country, Leslie will never give in to some of its social, or more accurately ethnic, biases, which are happily outmoded in the East: i.e., she refuses to treat Mexicans with dark skin as if they were somehow lesser human beings. Despite the fact that he is deeply in love with his wife and sensitive to her compassion and generosity, Bick nonetheless remains a Texan rancher imbued with the traditional prejudices of his region. Their conflict will compromise the unity of the Benedict household for a time, but the husband will finally accept that in this particular moral

domain, his wife occupies the higher ground. Twenty years later, he will even accept, though reluctantly, the marriage of his son to a young Mexican woman.

Thus far I've left an important character out of my discussion: local handyman Jett Rink (James Dean), the son of a poor family who did not have the chances in life of a Bick Benedict. Jett is a volatile young fellow who seems both attached to the Benedict ranch, where he does some work for Bick, and envious of his boss. We also understand that he is silently in love with Leslie. Upon the death of Bick's older sister, Luz, Jett inherits from her a small piece of land worth only a few dollars until the day he discovers oil on it—and suddenly becomes richer than his former bosses, the Benedicts.

The second part of *Giant* takes up the situation some twenty years later. The Benedict children have grown up, yet they don't wish to succeed their father and continue to run the ranch in the family tradition. The son who married a Mexican wants to be a doctor; Bick and Leslie's daughter wants to study animal husbandry at a Texas university. Bick tries to interest his daughter's new husband in working on the ranch after he returns from the recently declared war, but this man also refuses. In the face of such resistance, Bick finally agrees to let Jett prospect for oil on the Benedict ranch, where Jett (already oil-rich) in fact discovers oil, begins oil production, and suddenly becomes the unchallenged magnate of the region—making the Benedicts richer than they ever were as cattle ranchers.

Alas, Jett Rink: single with gray hair, and hardly an improved person as a millionaire. Alcohol has made him an old man before his time. The film ends with a long and terrible scene that consecrates both his triumph and his decay. During a huge reception, organized to his glory, Jett appears dead-drunk and, after creating an abominable scandal by insulting Brick's Mexican daughter-in-law, he falls asleep at a banquet table before he can begin his speech. On the way home, the day after this "memorable" evening, the Benedict family stops at a roadside restaurant whose owner refuses to serve customers of color—Mexicans as well as blacks. This will be Bick's chance to liquidate the last remnants of his bigoted sentiment; he fights with the owner, a foul colossus who beats

him up, then takes down a restaurant sign (saying “We reserve the right to refuse service to anyone”) and tosses it on top of his opponent. Yet the defeat of Bick’s self-esteem is actually a victory: it is the triumph of Leslie, of the democratic and tolerant spirit of the East against the familiar prejudices of the old West in the form of one Texan family. Farming has given way to oil, the world is changing, and the Benedict brood is dispersing, but from this good, if slowly dying, stock is born a better American citizenry: stronger, more humane, richer in every respect.

Cinema and Sociology

Far be it from me to ridicule the sociological background of American cinema. I think, on the contrary, that such background constitutes one of the definitive components of this cinema’s greatness, not to say of its superiority. Would to heaven that the Soviet cinema brought to us, about Russia, a fraction of the social testimony of Hollywood on the United States! However, we must first distinguish between social testimony that is critical and the kind that is apologetic, then discern the films in which the sociological documentation is not yet outdated: where it is integrated into the logic of art, as it were. For example, comedies or westerns are implicitly testimonials about American society. But their documentary value only comes second: it is entirely subordinate to the laws of the genre, and in such subordination lies the secret of these movies’ greatness (when they achieve it). By contrast, a picture like *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, though a highly significant commentary on some of the moral concerns of modern American society, is merely the dramatic shaping and otherwise wishful, Pharisaic resolution of these concerns.

The Terrorism of Money

We already know into which category I place *Giant*. Basically, the same scenario could very well have been the subject of a B-movie directed by Rudolph Maté or Douglas Sirk. Indeed, the script of *Written on the Wind* [1956, Sirk, from the 1945 novel by Robert Wilder] is not so far removed from that of *Giant*, although it remains at the intellectual level

of the comic strips. The fact that Stevens' picture lasts over three hours and that the director gives a little more nuance to his characters does not alter the root of the problem, however: *Giant* is a sociological film and nothing more. That its morality has a certain sympathetic side (particularly in its anti-bigotry) cannot, in the event, render us any more well-disposed toward this work.

If *Giant* possesses a certain poetry, it resides in the kind of vertigo that seizes European consciousness before the omnipotence of such gigantic financial fortunes. At least over here, the power of great wealth is more discreet if not more occult. The sum of a million dollars in France takes on the transcendent force of a tragic deity; the oil that springs from American ground is a kind of a melodramatic demon. In any case, *Giant* will offer to naïve European minds a very eloquent psychological explanation concerning the cynical indifference of Texan oilmen toward our own little energy troubles on the continent. We will only have to imagine that the refueling of our cars depends on James Dean!

This actor, for the first time in *Giant*, embodies an unsympathetic character. Not entirely, perhaps—to the extent that we are told that the bitterness fostered by his initial poverty has been aggravated by an impossible love—but the bottom line is on the whole very bad, and I would hardly be exaggerating if I were to say that Jett Rink is fundamentally an envious, embittered, devious, and tyrannical figure.

Myth Is Stronger than Cinema

It is the peculiar and paradoxical destiny of James Dean that death petrified him into a legend totally contradicted by this posthumous film. But the sociological madness that constitutes idolatry for what amounts, in real life, to a broken youth is inevitably impervious to the biographical evidence. Let me make myself clear. Dean was certainly a great actor, and his work in *Giant* proves that, in addition to his exceptional gifts, he had intelligence and a mastery of his profession. Yet what we know about him does not make us very sympathetic toward the man. I'm not referring to Yves Salgues's insidious and insincere book [*James Dean ou*

le mal de vivre (*James Dean: Or the Evil of Life*), 1957]. But try carefully rereading the long and penetrating testimony of Nicholas Ray that appeared in the Christmas issue of *Cahiers du cinéma* ["Portrait of the Actor as a Young Man: James Dean," no. 65 (Dec. 1956)]. It will be easy to discern, through the director's frank yet sympathetic portrayal of an exceptionally sensitive personality, a judgment that is nevertheless clear-sighted with regard to Dean's character.

We see especially that James Dean, himself from a poor background, not only lost interest in old friends, but also behaved in a particularly cruel way toward those of his friends who did not succeed. Again, these details are of little importance if we are to ignore the man or at least separate it from the myth; besides, we could all immediately name ten great actors about whom similar anecdotes are circulating. Nothing would be more foolish than to esteem Dean's high mythological status and then reproach the man for not being like the myth. I just want to say, in addition, that it seems paradoxically likely that Dean's last role, in *Giant*, is the closest to his psychological truth, while that of *Rebel Without a Cause* [1955, Nicholas Ray] is indeed consistent with his myth (even if it is this role, of the "rebel," that created it). Such that death at the wheel of a racing car, which crystallized his legend, finds in his final film a terrible, realistic denial of it. But if cinema creates myths, then the myths sometimes become stronger than the cinema itself.

It should be noted that the part played by James Dean in *Giant* is only the third in importance, and that the two main protagonists are Elizabeth Taylor and Rock Hudson, both excellent. I had seen Hudson previously solely in a less advantageous role in *Written on the Wind*; his performance as Bick Benedict will probably lead to his further ascendance as an actor.

I do not want to end my otherwise rather severe review without giving some credit to *Giant*'s artistic scheme, which on the whole is rather less aestheticized than that of *A Place in the Sun* or *Shane*. The whole introduction is of a rather rare quality, and one could even extend this quality to the first forty-five minutes of the film. The revelation of Texas, in particular, is both an extraordinary lesson in physical and

human geography and one of the few slices of current cinema that can be said to constitute a surrealism of the image. (*France-Observateur*, March 21, 1957)

A Week Devoted to Westerns: *The Last Hunt* & *Seven Men from Now*

This week is devoted to the western. My colleague at *France-Observateur*, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze [1920-89], will review *The True Story of Jesse James* [1957], a biographical and historical western, which Nicholas Ray seems to have made expressly to illustrate the thesis propounded by Jean-Louis Rieupeyrout in his book *Le Western : Ou le cinéma américain par excellence* [*The Western, or the American Cinema Par Excellence*, 1953].

At the same time that I reserved for myself the Richard Brooks film titled *The Last Hunt* [1956], endowed with its share of brilliant qualities, I went to see, out of professional necessity and without any enthusiasm, *Seven Men from Now* [1957, Budd Boetticher], which was released in central Paris without advertising and with all the appearances of an exclusive engagement designed to “kill” it during the off-season. I fear, alas, that I must warn readers because, unless the picture is dubbed, it will not move to the other districts of Paris or to the French provinces. As for exclusive engagements in central Paris, they don’t remain here for very long. So, if *Seven Men from Now* is still in town after July 19th, I advise all fans of the western to rush to see it. If they share my opinion, they will see the best western of the year and one of the two or three best westerns of the postwar period; but even if they are less enthusiastic than I am, they will not regret having gone to see this movie.

The Last Hunt

Let’s start with Richard Brooks. One could hardly imagine what the director of *Blackboard Jungle* [1955] would do with this epic yet conventional genre. But it’s inconceivable that an American director is

unfit for the western, as inconceivable as that a painter worthy of the name would not know how to execute a nude. For the western is not a genre among others: it is, for the United States, the very root of the cinema. Certainly, some artists like Anthony Mann can reveal the full measure of their talents solely in this traditional genre. John Ford himself was able to produce his best work through the western, but even if a director turns out just one or two westerns during his career, like William Wyler (*The Westerner* [1940]) or Robert Aldrich (*Apache* [1954], *Vera Cruz* [1954]), we never discern that the genre itself determines the inexperience of the filmmaker. That is, the legacy of half a century of westerns is the heritage of every actor, director, screenwriter, and technician in Hollywood. To make a western is simply to revert to a kind of classicism, in any event to refer back to certain rules, style, and content. Only from such a starting point is it possible for an *auteur* both to make an original contribution to the genre and to make a worthwhile addition to his own *oeuvre*.

In *The Last Hunt*, the most immediate novelty lies in a subject that, if not absolutely original, at least has never been treated on such a scale and with so much realism. Two men team up to hunt buffalo. It is the period during which indiscriminate slaughters have already reduced this dumb yet gregarious animal to near extinction, at the same time depriving the last Indian tribes of their major food source. Of these two hunters, one, very experienced, reluctantly participates and feels compelled only by circumstances to start the killing again. The other man, by contrast, gets sadistic delight out of the butchering. The first is a friend of the Indians, the second rather regrets that he is not able to shoot them down as freely as he does the buffalo—which does not prevent him, however, from sleeping with the Indian girl they have hired to tan the hides, who suffers her fate with dignity and ... frigidity, until the good hunter, disgusted by his partner and all this needless slaughter, decides to take the Indian girl back to her tribe. The other hunter pursues and catches up with them on a freezing night, but the traditional gun duel does not take place. By dawn, though wearing the hide of the last buffalo he killed as protection against the cold, the bad

guy has frozen to death while waiting to ambush the couple outside their shelter.

The Tricks of Hollywood Writers

The moral context and social concern of this scenario undoubtedly reflect the beliefs of Richard Brooks, which are no secret. Yet these sympathetic intentions do not serve the film well, and the situation is made even worse by the fact that they are visible not only in *The Last Hunt*'s ideational framework but also in its *mise-en-scène*.

To digress for a moment, in an interview with *Cahiers du cinéma* [no. 69, March 1957], the best current director of westerns, Anthony Mann, revealed that one of the tricks of Hollywood screenwriters is to remake, within the framework of the western genre, famous novels that are distant in time and place. Thus Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* [which itself would be given a traditional adaptation by Richard Brooks in 1958] has already been filmed, in a sense: it is King Vidor's *Duel in the Sun* [1946]; and Anthony Mann, in realizing *The Furies* [1950], was not unaware of what his script owed to *The Idiot*. [Niven Busch's 1948 novel *The Furies*—from which Mann's screenplay was adapted—was inspired by Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot*.] Sometimes, moreover, the transposition is methodical and avowed, as was the case for Edward Dmytryk's *Broken Lance* [1954], a genuine remake by screenwriter Philip Yordan of *House of Strangers* [1949, Joseph L. Mankiewicz], itself based on Jerome Weidman's contemporary American novel *I'll Never Go There Anymore* [1941].

It is therefore not surprising that the modern western is often a psychological film with a moral or social thesis. Only the framework of the action—the use of certain roles and scenes—maintains the conventions of the genre; but the *nature* of the action and the characters proceeds from a more or less deep transmutation that makes these western movies aesthetic bastards. In addition to the western revitalized by an unusual set of characters, a new set of parts in the machine, as it were, it would be necessary to speak, then, of the “westernization” of foreign or native scripts of an indeterminate kind and substance.

An Excellent But Impure Western

To return to *The Last Hunt*, this time it's not about *The Brothers Karamazov* or *The Idiot*, but about *Moby Dick*. The search for and murder of a rare white buffalo takes the place here of the quest for the famous whale. The comparison cannot be pushed too far, of course, because *The Last Hunt* does not have the rich and ambiguous symbology of Herman Melville's 1851 novel; nonetheless, a few symbols are present in Richard Brooks's film: concrete symbols, embodied in the *mise-en-scène*. The massacre of the buffalo is obviously analogous to the extermination of the Indian race. To love killing these passive animals is to love to kill in general, to enjoy feeling superior to the life one destroys. Yet such an act also disturbs the order of creation. Indeed, there is something Luciferian in this pre-fascist attitude that naturally opens itself up to the charge of racism.

What creates the quality of Richard Brooks's film is that this attitude, this moral logic, does not remain conceptual or abstract, at least not merely. The massacre of the buffalo is not just a metaphor; we actually witness throughout *The Last Hunt* the extraordinary killing of these animals: struck in the head by a bullet, they fall, their legs folding under them, and suddenly before our eyes we find them in the commemorative position of oxen on the walls of prehistoric caves. (It should be noted at once that these controlled and numbered executions could only have been carried out under an agreement with the American National Wildlife Federation, and within an explicit legal framework calling for the annual reduction of the bison herds.) The same therefore goes for this buffalo hunt as for another famous hunt, for rabbit in *The Rules of the Game* [1939, Jean Renoir]: it does not symbolize a moral truth, it *realizes* that truth.

If *The Last Hunt* is an excellent western, it is nevertheless, as I have attempted to show, an impure western, the result of the transition to the form of a scenario that, in essence, has nothing to do with the genre. Yet the height of the operation that I call "westernization" was reached with films like *High Noon* [1952, Fred Zinnemann] and especially *Shane* [1953, George Stevens], where the object of "westernization" is ... the western itself. I mean that the scenario and

characters are well in accordance with the traditions and rules of the genre, but they are moved, in a sense, to the background; that is to say, they are less part of the content of the picture than its very subject, its deep structure if you will.

This is particularly clear in *Shane*, where George Stevens has consistently respected the uses and conditions of the western tradition, stylizing them even to the extreme, but only in order to express a mythical meaning and a moral symbolism. The cowboy attempting to redeem himself for past wrongs explicitly becomes here the errant knight in search of the Holy Grail. Naïve in essence, the western thus construed becomes too ambitious and consciously symbolic. I have to say, furthermore, that I hated *Shane*. Finally, it is the opposite of a true western, which is intelligent without being ambitious, artistic without being aestheticized, full of humor without mocking the audience and its own characters: the ideal example, in other words, of what is possible in the genre, and of what one can do when one attempts to transcend it—at the same time as one respects it.

Since the western still exists today, it would be futile to ignore its past along with the evolution of its audience. Except at the level of infra-artistic exploitation, the western can no longer be truly naïve: such naïveté can only persist in hindsight, as an object of irony. But the danger then is mortal: it is that of parody, a disease specific to decadence—of the kind we find in the French theater of melodrama as sung, let us say, to the tune of Jean-Philippe Rameau’s “Frère Jacques.” The problem is to play off western conventions while respecting them enough to preserve their original virtues. No doubt the sole way to save the purity of the western without feigning naïveté or displaying genuine foolishness is to combine love for the genre with faithfulness to its techniques.

Seven Men from Now

Seven Men from Now is first and foremost a good classic scenario. A former sheriff is pursuing through the desert seven bandits who, during the robbery of a bank, murdered his wife. For him, this is only about revenge and the recovery of \$20,000 in gold; but for another character

who will soon join him, the execution of the bandits is the way to get the stolen gold for himself. Provisionally supportive of each other, the two men must therefore become enemies in the end after the seven bandits are killed: the question becomes whether one man will abscond with the money or the chest of gold will be returned to Wells Fargo. Using this absolutely traditional scaffolding, the screenwriter, Burt Kennedy, has constructed the most dazzling script I have seen since Anthony Mann's *The Naked Spur* [1953]. And the admirable thing is that the richness and variety of Kennedy's scenario owe absolutely nothing to psychology and sociology or to any philosophy-at-a-discount. Nothing else matters here except the situations, the characters, and the setting of the western, all of them involved in a subtle game that depends for its outcome upon their unique combination.

The critic Éric Rohmer is right to compare the rules of the western to those of checkers. Much simpler than chess, checkers actually requires more invention and calculation. Beauty is born, in this case, of simplicity. The imagination plays on nothing in *Seven Men from Now*, yet its director, Budd Boetticher—whom, up to now, I have not ranked so high despite achievements that are not insignificant—knows that, on a strictly conventional set such as this one, every shot should contain surprises. I will mention in particular the way the bathing of the leading female character is treated: the slightest movement of water between the reeds is enough to create an atmosphere of totally abstract eroticism—one that, abstract or not, will completely justify the influence of this woman on the action.

I talked earlier about humor. It is blatant in the bathing scene and in many others. Because we play the genre-game with feeling and sincerity but also lucidity, we do not refrain from having fun with conventions that we otherwise respect, and whose beauty in any case requires admiration. One of the film's nuggets, humorous and sublime at the same time, lies in the ellipsis surrounding the sheriff's gunshots, which move at such high speed that the camera somehow has no time to see them. I would also like to point out that the dialogue of *Seven Men from Now* possesses an amazingly laconic quality that is an absolute delight.

The Western Is an Unknown Genre

Perhaps the balance between humor and emotion would not be tenable had *Seven Men from Now* been made in the studio. It probably works here because of Budd Boetticher's use of the landscape (including the extraordinary boulder polished by wind erosion), which gives each image a nobility and grandeur in relation to which humor can only exist in counterpoint. I will note, finally, William H. Clothier's incredible color cinematography, whose deliciously artificial overlay confirms the refined naïveté of the film's *mise-en-scène*.

Still, the western ultimately remains an unknown genre, torn between stupidity and pretense, whose real beauty is no longer recognized. Ill-served by its distributor, certainly ignored or misunderstood by the majority of critics, *Seven Men from Now* will go unnoticed even more than did *The Searchers* [1956], John Ford's secret masterpiece also released on the fly, at the end last summer. Go figure ... (*France-Observateur*, July 18, 1957)

A King in New York, an Artist in Europe: Chaplin's Latest Film

The latest film by Charles Chaplin [in his final leading role] is dividing opinion. We should have expected it. To the purely aesthetic reasons for which I have already offered my criticisms of *Limelight* [1952] and particularly of *Monsieur Verdoux* [1947], we can now add controversial motives on the part of the director—motives that are less in keeping with art than politics. *A King in New York* [1957] has been labeled a polemic against the United States, at least against the America of recent years that Chaplin decided to flee for Europe.

In our divided world, sliding towards political Manichaeism, Chaplin's new picture inevitably pleases some by irritating others. I believe, however, that to judge *A King in New York* fairly, and especially to its advantage, it is advisable—naturally, at the same time as one does not ignore the deliberate intentions of its author—to examine the whole enterprise without passion and even without humor. The satire of manners, as practiced here, has a healthy literary, theatrical, and pictorial tradition. After all, let's not place Chaplin in conflict with *Tartuffe*: leave that to the devotees of Molière. This film, then, deserves neither perfidious criticism nor silly praise. As for Charlie himself, he need only go see *Modern Times* [1936] to convince himself that the genius of satire can produce beautiful children. Alas, I do not think that *A King in New York* itself is a successful scion on the level of *Modern Times*; and, in all sincerity, I must first try to elucidate why his latest work is a disappointment.

Chaplin's error, or worse, blindness, seems to me to reside in the fact that his attacks are too personal in character. They do not arise

from any significant generative principle; we feel, rather, that the somewhat naïve philosophy behind the film rests on a base of private, if not petty, rancor. President Eisenhower's passion for golf may seem ridiculous to Chaplin, yet should the nature of American democracy really be attacked along such a line? And one specific form of criticism arrives a few years late: the House Un-American Activities Committee is indirectly, if not directly, denounced in *A King in New York*. If I want hilarious or brutal satire of contemporary America, however, I can find a more convincing version, to speak just of this year, in Frank Tashlin's latest movie (*Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?* [1957]) or in the last picture by Elia Kazan (*A Face in the Crowd* [1957]). No, in truth, Chaplin's anti-Americanism is hardly more convincing than that of some Frenchmen: for example, the authors Georges Duhamel [1884-1966] and Marcel Aymé [1902-67]. In any event, Hollywood has already served up this particular dish, and with more than enough verve.

This reservation expressed, which is not unimportant, I now feel free to say what I admire about *A King in New York*. First of all, anything that comes from Chaplin has conferred on it, by its very origin, a dignity in addition to an almost specific meaning. Not only because genius transfigures everything the man touches, but also, and above all, because a new film by the Tramp's father cannot be accepted and understood as an independent or autonomous work. It necessarily must take its place in the history and evolution of the Chaplin myth. To wit: *A King in New York* is an avatar of the Tramp, and we unconsciously—and inescapably—see it as such. Yet for the first time here, in my opinion, David's slingshot misses Goliath's forehead, though it's still a new episode that we are witnessing in the little fellow's fight against the giants of the modern world, and that in itself is beautiful. Besides, it's not as if all of Chaplin's comic gems have already been used up. In the first part of *A King in New York*, at least, a number of gags are worthy of placement in the imaginary museum of the Chaplinesque.

Nonetheless, the weaknesses of the movie's scenario do not diminish in any way the splendor of its visual style. It would be foolish to go so far as to say that the sublime style of *A King in New York* is superior to that of other Chaplin pictures. But I hasten to add that, to

offset the shortcomings of his scenario, the author-director seems to have felt compelled to augment the deftness and rigor of his *mise-en-scène*—unless the viewer has so little interest in the history of cinema that he will pay no attention to the details of cinematic style. This particular one, in any case, testifies to more control than Chaplin has heretofore exhibited. The sharpness of the editing, the skill of the temporal as well as tonal disruptions within a sequence, the intelligence of the ellipses, the beauty of Georges Périnal's black-and-white cinematography, and still other qualities (including the wonder of Chaplin's own music together with the clarity and vigor of the acting) make this film, for those who can see a little further than its plot, an enchantment for the eye and, even more so, for the spirit. Though Chaplin has sometimes offered us more, we knew that he could not give us less. (*L'Éducation nationale*, November 7, 1957)

From the Small Screen to the Big One: *The Bachelor Party* & *Twelve Angry Men*

A King in New York [1957, Charles Chaplin], it seems, has marked the end of a series of important releases until the start of the New Year. This means a period of relative calm that will allow me to turn a bit to films that I had regrettably neglected: in particular, two American productions, *The Bachelor Party* [1957, Delbert Mann] and *Twelve Angry Men* [1957, Sidney Lumet].

My joining them together here is justified in ways that are fundamentally—and formally—important. Both illustrate in an especially significant manner the current renaissance of social realism in American cinema. More precisely, this is a *critical* realism shining a cruel, if not implacable, light on the mores of the United States and, beyond even mores, on the implicit morality that manufactures them. It is remarkable that most of these socially-themed films belong to the same category of production. Made in black and white and under relatively modest economic circumstances, they are not spectacular movies. They are meant to attract audiences solely on the basis of their sociological subject matter and the truth of that matter. Technically, they might as well have been shot, not only before CinemaScope, but, say, in 1937.

In fact, these pictures illustrate a curious phenomenon: the shock effect of television on the cinema. At first, when Hollywood had to face massive competition from the small screen, the film producers thought to combat it through a kind of spectacular outbidding whereby TV would be irremediably neutralized: I'm talking about the 3-D experiment, the various wide screens, and the widespread application of

color. Then the crisis passed, with a *modus vivendi* established between the small screen and the big one: little by little, television no longer appeared to be public enemy number one of the movie industry. It became, instead, a kind of cheap branch or outlet where young talents could test their ideas and their abilities; and, from another point of view, TV became a profound modifier of the public's taste.

No doubt it was fair to believe that the visually undernourished television audience wanted to find in the cinema, by contrast, a luxurious image, immense, clear, and colorful. However, it was no less true that, though this audience was accustomed to seeing at home, on an everyday basis, "little" shows in black and white with a crude image, these shows often dealt directly with current, familiar subjects—subjects that, quite naturally, could be depicted in the cinema in the same spirit as on television but with far more care, if not with up-to-date plastic sumptuousness. Once the movie producers figured this out and implemented a plan to capitalize, the balance sheet of the cinema shifted in two contrary ways. On the one hand, a kind of film was introduced that disdains visual luxury and lavish *mise-en-scène* for the sake of the subject itself and, above all, its value as social testimony; on the other hand, there was an actual increase in productions devoted exclusively to optical display on a grand scale.

So now let's get to *The Bachelor Party* and *Twelve Angry Men*. The first picture, directed by Delbert Mann, was written by Paddy Chayefsky, already famous for *Marty* [1955]—also directed by Mann—which, like *The Bachelor Party*, was another of his TV successes that made its way, triumphantly, to the cinema. For my taste, Chayefsky's second script is better than his first. *Marty* was perhaps more skillful, but above all it was more sentimental and even a bit melodramatic. It will be remembered that, in *Marty*, there was a problem concerning two shy people whose youth was fading and who were both less than attractive, yet each of whom wanted to marry. *The Bachelor Party* resumes, if I may say so, the question *a posteriori* to reveal the material concerns, and especially the psychological ones, of the average American couple. The least we can say, certainly, is that conjugality does not appear to be paradise, in the United States as elsewhere. Unfortunately, I do not

have enough space here to analyze the numerous other sociological lessons offered by this extremely rich film, whose *mise-en-scène* is brilliant at the same time as it appears to be “neutral.”

Even more brilliant although even less spectacular is *Twelve Angry Men*, made by another young TV defector, Sidney Lumet, written by Reginald Rose, and produced by Henry Fonda, who also acts in the picture. Its story [like that of *The Bachelor Party*, originally broadcast on television] is a challenge because it takes place entirely in the cramped space of a jury room in an American courthouse. Twelve jurors come together to discuss the fate of a young man accused of murder; at first, no one questions his guilt—no one except a single juror (Juror 8, played by Fonda), who will be the only person to vote “not guilty” in the first round of ballots. However, we know that U.S. law requires unanimity from the jury, whatever the final verdict.

The ninety-six minutes of the movie will be devoted to showing us, without leaving these few square meters of space, how the Henry Fonda character, though initially standing alone against the opinion of all the others, nonetheless succeeds in undermining everyone else’s easy certainty and, in the end, in obtaining twelve votes for the innocence of the accused. One has to imagine the dramatic imagination that went into creating this fascinating, psychologically realistic motion picture, which, from start to finish, never changes its subject or its location. In spite of such obstacles, Sidney Lumet ingeniously achieved his goal, and *Twelve Angry Men* was rightly awarded the grand prize, or Golden Bear, at the 1957 Berlin Film Festival. (*L’Éducation nationale*, November 28, 1957)

Bitter Victory, Gratifying Defeat: Nicholas Ray's New Picture

I certainly expected a lot from Nicholas Ray's new picture: first, because the director of *Bigger than Life* [1956] is one of the American directors for whom I have the most hope; and, second, because *Bitter Victory* [1957] is his first French film or at least European one, and it is always interesting to see an American director experience the relative artistic freedom offered by non-Hollywood cinema.

Bitter Victory is adapted from René Hardy's 1956 French novel, which I must admit I have not read. Had I read it, I wonder whether I would be able to choose between the contradictory opinions of the writers Roger Stéphane [1919-94] and Claude Mauriac [1914-96], whom I met after we had all screened the film. Stéphane seemed to find that the movie had somewhat betrayed and weakened the book, while Mauriac assured me that the picture had rather improved upon the novel by condensing it. In any event, I am reduced to judging what I saw without an external reference point. The scenario is fascinating and certainly one of the best to be inspired by the last war, at the very least the most "adult." This is perhaps the first film to approach such a subject from on high, by which I mean from an essentially ethical point of view. Even *Attack!* [1956, Robert Aldrich] remained in part a critique of social customs if not political connections, whereas *Bitter Victory* depicts a military action in order to reveal the moral worth of men beneath, or beyond, their own actions.

Ultimate Realities

The plot of Nicholas Ray's movie is simple in subject if more complex in dramatic development. During World War II, two Allied officers in Egypt are selected to lead an extremely dangerous commando mission behind enemy lines in Libya, specifically Benghazi: they are to steal documents from German headquarters there that will allow the Allied command to learn more about the upcoming battle plans of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel in North Africa. Between these two allies stands a woman, the wife of the first man, Major David Brand (a South African), but the former lover of the second, Captain Jim Leith (a Welshman). Doubtless, love still exists between the latter two, though, for the moment, Brand's wife opts for loyalty toward her husband—the kind of loyalty that he understandably does not discourage yet that naturally provokes his rival.

After the commando unit parachutes behind enemy lines, Brand's hand shakes with fright when he has to knife a German sentry; the act is performed by Leith, who neglects to shoot the major (as he may have been entitled to do) for his cowardice. Nonetheless, by his mere presence the captain now serves to taunt Brand, who does not dare to get rid of him directly but will succeed in doing so indirectly, through his own form of neglect, in a kind of bitter, illusory victory that will certainly not be a victory over himself. Brand's real courage comes from finally having to face the fact that he does not deserve either his wife or the military medal he receives for the secret mission—a medal that he ends up pinning on a mannequin.

This abbreviated summary of *Bitter Victory* hardly reflects the subtlety of the relations between the two officers, relations in which the conquest of a woman is only the spring of a moral mechanism whose true object is to reveal the ultimate reality at the heart of each man. Brand, the protagonist, realizes at the film's conclusion that he himself is a kind of mannequin, dressed up in a major's uniform.

Above Average

Knowing what the director of *The Lusty Men* [1952] is capable of, and considering the affinities of the present scenario with other inspired

work by Nicholas Ray (*Bitter Victory* is in fact a transposition to the Age of Reason, as it were, of the themes of *Rebel Without a Cause* [1955]), I think it was possible to hope for a masterpiece in this instance, but I also think we're far enough away from that category here. Still, it's a good thing that the film is clearly directed by Ray. I find something in it of the tense, painful lyricism that made me love *Rebel Without a Cause*.

However, one lyrical tone is not enough to make a movie! A tone, not even a style, because the style of *Bitter Victory* is more confused than ambiguous, so much so that the intentions of the author-director are often mired in such uncertain division that it is obvious some shots were inserted to create indispensable connections in scenes that otherwise simply did not have them. Yes, I know all about Lev Kuleshov and the close-up of Ivan Mosjoukine's face ... all the same, this last-ditch editing effort on Ray's part is unworthy of such an ambitious enterprise.

[Kuleshov conducted a psychological montage experiment in which a shot of the expressionless face of Czarist matinee idol Mosjoukine was alternated with various other shots (a plate of hot soup, a little girl lying in a wooden coffin, a pretty woman reclining on a sofa). The film footage was then shown to an audience that believed that the expression on Mosjoukine's face was different each time he appeared, depending on whether he was "looking at" the plate of soup, the girl in the coffin, or the woman on the sofa, and showing an expression of hunger, grief, or desire, respectively. The footage of Mosjoukine was actually the same shot each time.]

To be sure, I am not discouraging you from going to see *Bitter Victory*: that is because, with all its faults, this disappointing film is still a beautiful piece of work, if only on account of its subject or thesis, and also because its director could not be anyone other than himself. I would like to have had more in this case, but, even so, Nicholas Ray's picture is a lot more than you get on average from the cinema. (*France-Observateur*, November 28, 1957)

Making a Killing: Stanley Kubrick's *The Killing*

Some readers wrote to me last year to protest the provincial practice of film mutilation. During the little debate that began among us, I had to question the existence of this sad practice, at least to conclude that it was probably not as frequent as the viewers, in good faith, believed—given the existence of gaps in narratives that, in their view, were too violent to make sense. In any event, it appeared that, in the case of indisputable cuts, the theater owner-operator was not always the person responsible, and that these were much more often the work of the distributor. This week, I can provide some sadly stunning evidence of my supposition.

The potential ticket-buyer who stops in front of the movie theater on the Champs-Élysées where *The Killing* [1956, Stanley Kubrick] is showing has the leisure to admire a big, enticing poster representing a naked woman whose hands are tied up—a woman who also appears to have been beaten. Among the photographs exhibited, the customer will notice several relating to a very “undressed” love scene between Coleen Gray [as Fay] and Sterling Hayden [as Johnny Clay]; he may also notice another photo showing half a dozen corpses scattered around a room. If, after leaving the theater, the viewer gathers his senses and remembers the large poster and photos, he will notice that nothing in the movie he just saw corresponds to the images displayed at the theater entrance. Yet we’re not talking about a provincial theater here, or even a neighborhood cinema, but, supposedly, a place (in central Paris, no less) where films are screened exclusively in their “original” versions.

If, as is likely, this advertising charade accompanies *The Killing* on its regional rounds, the provincial viewer endowed with a minimum

of observatory skill will be able to conclude that, in all likelihood, a timid or cynical owner-operator has cheated him out of 200 to 300 meters of film. In fact, this footage will have been coldly cut in Paris either directly by the distributor or at the distributor's behest, in the belief that the picture in question would be commercially improved by doing so.

A Foolish Cut

As for *The Killing*, it is not difficult to guess the psychology behind at least one of the above-mentioned cuts. The shot of the dead bodies doubtless ends a scene of great brutality, but, even more so, of extreme cruelty wherein one sees the accomplices of a robbery (engineered by the Hayden character), gathered for the division of the money, surprised and massacred by a scoundrel who got wind of the heist from the girlfriend of one of the participants and decided to steal all the money for himself. Unlike the scenes relating to Coleen Gray's relationship with Sterling Hayden, this scene remains more or less whole, but the final shots culminating in murderous violence were suppressed because they seemed unbearable to the sensitive souls of the grocers who distributed the film. Thus did the dying little rabbits in *The Rules of the Game* [1939, Jean Renoir] also disappear ...

In the case at hand, the omission deprives the story of a logical element essential to its balance: the killing of the entire criminal gang (including the thieving interloper) with the exception of Sterling Hayden. Moreover, it was only from an emotional or sentimental point of view that the cut was determined, in a piece of rare imbecility, because Kubrick's film is entirely based on the premise of violence and, if it is to be successful, it obviously must be faithful to this premise. Not to be so is akin to removing the spice or flavor from an American-style lobster sauce.

Such practices, alas, are common, though rarely as insolent as here, where cynicism—unless it is unconsciousness—goes so far as to display its intentions conspicuously. These actions are expressly contrary to French law, at least when the film is cut *after* obtaining its exhibition permit (although I cannot be sure that this is the case for *The Killing*);

yet never to my knowledge has an owner-operator or a distributor gotten into less trouble for having edited the editing of a film after it was put into distribution, as Kubrick's work was so edited.

An Authorial Personality

For health reasons, I was able to see *The Killing* only after a certain delay, and, because I therefore had time to read the critiques, I was for the most part very favorably disposed. If you know anything about Hollywood, you know that, my health aside, I've been waiting a long time for this picture, which was released all over Europe before coming to France. Perhaps my anticipation, combined with the positive reviews, is the cause of my slight disappointment. Only slight because there are enough qualities in *The Killing* to ensure the strength and appeal of Stanley Kubrick's directorial personality.

We know that this young director, just twenty-nine years old, has managed to succeed by methods almost unheard of in Hollywood. From photography Kubrick moved on to amateur moviemaking, from amateur cinema to short film, and then, with his family's money, he managed to make a very cheap commercial feature, *Killer's Kiss* [1955], which had no success but was seen by a young television producer, James Harris, who decided to invest some money in the cinema. Thus was undertaken *The Killing*, which is adapted from a 1955 crime novel by Lionel White titled *Clean Break*.

In spite of its originality, *The Killing* does call forth comparisons with *Kiss Me Deadly* [1955, Robert Aldrich, from the crime novel by Mickey Spillane], because in both instances the *tour de force* consists, fundamentally, in purchasing a mediocre scenario and enriching it through the *mise-en-scène*—not in a formalistic way but by lending it, thanks to the overall style, a moral or even metaphysical perspective not present in the original. As for the picture's form, it attracts attention through its violent efficiency, which engenders surprise in a way that suddenly makes the typical *film noir* turn red, if you will. I have to say that I also often thought of *Rififi* [1955, Jules Dassin, from the crime novel by Auguste Le Breton] while watching Kubrick's movie, for reasons similar to those that made me think of *Kiss Me Deadly*.

The ingenuity of *The Killing* resides, first of all, in the objective structure of its scenario. This involves the preparation and execution of an extraordinarily bold plan to steal \$2 million from the money-counting room of a racetrack during a featured horse race. But the narrative is related to us like a police report (complete with passionless, voice-over narration), compelled as it is to reconstruct events exhaustively, often going back, in the film's complexly fractured narrative, and repeating part of the story in relation to this or that character. These points of view are never subjective, however; they exist solely to show and explain the events as clearly as possible. Gradually, these multiple overlaps (which have nothing to do with the flashback-structure of *Citizen Kane* [1941, Orson Welles]), far from giving the impression of repetition, create an extraordinary dramatic convergence whose power stems, I believe, from the impression of accuracy and rigor the overlaps give—accuracy and rigor analogous to those displayed by the men who preside over the hold-up itself. Indeed, all of Kubrick's film is analogically constructed like the famous—and artistically bold—getaway sequence toward the end, whose extraordinary suspensefulness is due to its own technical precision.

Nevertheless, the skill of this film's structure is only the framework for qualities perhaps more substantial, for Kubrick operates in *The Killing* on several stylistic levels. There is the style of the narrative, but there is also the style of acting and of the dialogue itself. The characters speak a lot yet they speak in a certain tone, a certain rhythm, which is quite different from what one usually finds in an American movie.

The Pattern of Tragedy

After so much praise, the reader may be surprised by my hesitation or waffling at the start of this review. I had my reasons, however. *The Killing* may have many qualities, but it also has flaws. Kubrick's scenario, otherwise so artfully constructed, is not without some weaknesses in its details. And it is largely the cleverness of its construction that makes us neglect some of the improbabilities. It is not impossible though it is not certain, for example, that the diversionary

fight created at the racetrack bar would require the intervention of both policemen in charge of the safe. Last but not least, the denouement is required to integrate too many loose strands, and the cache of banknotes scattered in the wind—here, on the airport tarmac—has been something of a stale device since ... *Freedom for Us* [1931, René Clair].

Like *Rififi*, like *The Asphalt Jungle* [1950, John Huston], *The Killing* is built on the pattern of tragedy: if crime does not pay, it's fate's fault. The film plays on our passions in this regard, on the fact that we are tired of seeing the gangster ultimately frustrated each time he has so painstakingly earned his fortune. And Kubrick knows that, in the course of the picture, we get attached to his chief gangster [Johnny Clay] to such an extent that this man's ultimate failure awakens in us a kind of tragic pity. Still, the gangster's destiny must be felt as the result, not of chance, but of necessity, which is the case in *The Killing*. In Huston's movie [in which Sterling Hayden also appears in a featured role], by contrast, it was the protagonist "Doc" Riedenschneider's own fault that he failed to achieve his goal. Just by chance, you see, the otherwise imperturbable accountant in *The Asphalt Jungle* had a weakness: little girls.

The Killing may be a film that sometimes rings hollow. But technically, it stands apart from the rest. This is not the primary reason to be satisfied with it, yet, all things considered, its qualities are such that Kubrick's picture does not disappoint. (*France-Observateur*, January 16, 1958)

Peyton Place, or the Pleasures of Hell

The ridiculous publicity that preceded the release of the new film by Mark Robson is both an unmerited benefit and an undeserved indignity. The road to hell is, indeed, paved with good intentions. The hell in question here may be found, in spirit if not in letter, in the American picture *Peyton Place* [1957].

This movie is a kind of provincial chronicle of Peyton Place, a fictional town in New England, perhaps New Hampshire. It is extended over the years 1937 to 1943 and centered on five or six main characters: namely, the principal of the local high school; a pretty widow who owns a dress shop and is the mother of a seventeen- or eighteen-year-old girl; another teenaged girl raped by her stepfather, whom she later murders in self-defense; a third high-school girl, looking for a husband, who goes skinny-dipping with the son of the owner of the local woolen mill; and a doctor who does not hesitate to label as appendicitis the raped girl's miscarriage (of the baby conceived as a result of her stepfather's sexual assault); and half a dozen other characters more or less involved with these protagonists.

In truth, nothing happens in Peyton Place that is more dreadful or extraordinary than what occurs in any other small, provincial town, be it in Europe or the United States; in fact, the tragic event that occurs here—the rape-cum-murder—is the only one that is newsworthy. But the film's relative daring lies in its exceptional frankness for the American cinema. And I mean *the cinema*, because at bottom Mark Robson is limited in this instance to filling in the little gap that happens to exist between the novel and motion pictures. For example, in *Peyton Place*'s source, Grace Metalious's bestselling 1956 book of the same name, the movie's miscarriage is actually an abortion, which amounts to

saying that the cinema remains in moral retreat compared to the frontal attack being waged on society by literature.

Tradition and Self-Criticism

Yet it is worth noting the current inclination of American film production toward social self-criticism. Admittedly, this is a very old tradition and one of the best in Hollywood, but it tended to disappear during the McCarthy era. The present renaissance, for its part, has its own particular characteristics. What's remarkable is that it no longer subscribes to an optimism that transcends the criticism of institutions and customs, as was the case for Frank Capra's *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* [1939] and *It's a Wonderful Life* [1946]. The present critical renaissance does not even subscribe to a pragmatic and relative optimism of the kind, for example, that can finally transform what seems to be the most anti-militaristic of acts into the very spirit of civic enterprise (as in *Hail the Conquering Hero* [1946, Preston Sturges]). No: the American world is now more and more portrayed as being burlesque (*Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?* [1957, Frank Tashlin]), comic (*Picnic* [1955, Joshua Logan]), or dramatic without recourse to that apologetic antidote to realism known as satire (*The Harder They Fall* [1956, Mark Robson]). The release of *Peyton Place* after films like *A Face in the Crowd* [1957, Elia Kazan], *Sweet Smell of Success* [1957, Alexander Mackendrick], *The Strange One* [1957, Jack Garfein], or *No Down Payment* [1957, Martin Ritt] invites us, therefore, to draw some meaningful conclusions.

Thinking of the Comics

But there is realism and there is realism, or, metaphorically speaking, not all wood is kindling. Social reality is of aesthetic interest only insofar as it becomes integrated into the cinema, where it can serve the art of spectacle or of narrative. Thus in Joshua Logan's *Picnic*, the reality of provincial life becomes a species of visual splendor, if not gluttony; and in Elia Kazan's *A Face in the Crowd*, the hero's ambitiousness, even selfishness, becomes a kind of crazily lyrical form of collective hypocrisy. In short, the greatness of American cinema resides not so much in its

realism as in its aptitude for integrating that realism into the most varied styles or genres, setting them artistically free in the process.

That is what's missing from *Peyton Place* despite its daring script. The characters' complicated stories reveal to us, with an unusual frankness, the rather terrifying aspects of American daily life in all its banality, but the *mise-en-scène* remains at the level merely of disclosure. It has no other ambition than to astonish us with its laboriously pointed candidness. Yet what does it matter if we know more explicitly what so many other films permit us to infer from their "indirect" dialogue and action?!

Seeing *Peyton Place*, I was moved to think of the comics. One encounter with the strip known as *The Heart of Juliet Jones* [an American comic-strip series created by Stan Drake for newspaper syndication in 1953] taught me much more about American provincial life in a few minutes than Mark Robson did in his nearly three hours of film. The cinematic equivalent of Drake's comic soap opera is not *Peyton Place* but the otherwise "minor," and excellent, *Written on the Wind* [1956, Douglas Sirk]. (*France-Observateur*, March 13, 1958)

Hemingway on Film: *A Farewell to Arms*

Two novels by Ernest Hemingway have just been adapted to the screen: *The Sun Also Rises* [1957, Henry King] and *A Farewell to Arms* [1957, Charles Vidor]. These are not the first of his works to be filmed, since we have also seen adaptations of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* [1943, Sam Wood], *To Have and Have Not* [1944, Howard Hawks], *The Killers* [1946, Robert Siodmak], *The Macomber Affair* [1947, Zoltan Korda], *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* [1952, Henry King], and the first screen version of *A Farewell to Arms*, as well [1932, Frank Borzage]. In truth, none of these adaptations has given rise to a cinematographic masterpiece. (The movie of *The Old Man and the Sea* [1958, John Sturges], with Spencer Tracy in the leading role, is coming soon.) Perhaps the least disappointing of these pictures were *The Macomber Affair* and *To Have and Have Not*, but in the first case the source was a Hemingway short story and in the second, two such stories ["One Trip Across" (1934) and "The Tradesman's Return" (1936), which make up the opening chapters of *To Have and Have Not* (1937)]: adaptation is then easier than it would be for true, and therefore longer, novels.

With *A Farewell to Arms*, Hemingway's 1929 semi-autobiographical work, the filmmaker was right away confronted with just such a true novel. The action is relatively simple and without many digressions, but the technique of the narrative presumes and activates what might be called the third novelistic dimension. Let me explain. The love of the American lieutenant Frederick Henry and the pretty English nurse, Catherine Barkley, transpires in the context of war: the First World War. Not, however, in direct dependence on this context, which favors or disfavors our couple only in a purely accidental way. The hero and heroine make love and war, yet these two actions never mingle in

their consciousness until the moment when they choose to flee the conflict—which never really concerned them in the first place—for Switzerland, where they hope to save their lives (and their baby’s, for Catherine is pregnant) and their love. Nonetheless, death manages to join them there, as well: Catherine dies in childbirth, as does the child itself.

The beauty of the novel—a beauty not exempt from a technique of writing that is sometimes too precious—resides in this counterpoint between love and war, with death providing the link between the two. It may perhaps also be necessary to mention the tone of Hemingway’s book, which, though narrated in the first person, is in fact cynically objective. The state of mind of the hero, Lt. Henry, is such that he rarely *reflects* on what is happening. He *reports*, and what he reports to us are acts, desires, pleasures, or inconveniences. For Henry, love itself is the sole desire that lasts, a pleasure more vivid and serious than all the others.

What’s left of all this in Charles Vidor’s film? At the same time, little and lots! Little, because there is no doubt that despite the movie’s fidelity to the letter—the “lot”—of the novel, we do not find in it much of Hemingway’s tone, his nonchalant dryness of observation, his tendency to place all feelings on the same level and distinguish them only by their intensity. The cinema transforms Hemingway’s story, which is crafted as a series of discontinuous notations akin to the chiselings on an engraving, into a traditionally structured narrative hammered out with a blunt instrument. Above all, the picture reduces to the same dramatic level two elements of different density: the very war and love cited above. Thus almost indifferently, *A Farewell to Arms* becomes, on screen, a love story thwarted by war or a war movie supplemented by romantic intrigue. In this operation, the specific interest of the novel disappears, an interest that resides precisely in the continuous distinction between these two orders of experience. The emphasis, as a result, strongly shifts in the film to the side of war.

Such a shift can be accounted for by the different nature of each medium’s means of expression. The novelist always has the freedom to describe only what he wants and to virtually ignore everything else. Even

when he simply writes, "However, the battle was raging," he says a great deal in just a few words. But if the filmmaker wants to translate them, he must reconstruct a universe necessarily more present to our eyes than our minds—which is what the novelist addresses with his words. Theoretically speaking, this does not mean that the motion-picture director cannot create visual equivalents for literary devices or techniques; he can sometimes do so, yet the cost is the renunciation of the capacity to ignite the viewer's imagination. In other words, a producer does not mobilize an army of extras to let them remain unseen on screen.

So *A Farewell to Arms* has become a "war movie." But if, forgetting for a moment the comparison with the novel, we judge it from this point of view, our reservations give way to a certain admiration. Let me note, in particular, the appeal and originality of the film's historical reconstruction. The atmosphere of the Italian front in the autumn of 1917, the debacle of the Battle of Caporetto—all this deserved to be evoked with exactitude and directness. It appears that such is the case here. Charles Vidor (perhaps aided in the preparation of the film by John Huston) was able to beautifully restore the era as much in selected detail as in overall setting. He also knew how to make the audience sensitive to, or capable of reading, the surface as well as structure of huge, graphically represented military events, whether at the beginning with the ascendance of the troops on the mountain, or later during the nightmarish retreat of the locals from Caporetto and the advancing Austro-German armies. For such choreographed set pieces alone, *A Farewell to Arms* is an interesting picture that deserves to be seen.

We then regret even more that the movie's sentimental action is not so convincing. Perhaps the failure here is attributable more to the casting than to the scenario. Neither Rock Hudson nor, especially, Jennifer Jones corresponds to Hemingway's idea of a protagonist in this novel. But is there not also an essential contradiction here, one difficult to surmount, between the notion of character on the part of the author of *A Farewell to Arms* and the psychological, or emotional-biographical,

baggage that any star actor brings *a priori* with him to the set?
(*L'Éducation nationale*, April 17, 1958)

Touch of Evil, or Welles and Ambiguity

Touch of Evil [1958] is the latest film to be directed by Orson Welles, only the eighth in almost twenty years and his first in Hollywood since *Macbeth* [1948]. This little reminder turns the release of Welles's current picture into a certain kind of event.

Welles left America in 1947 for Europe, where he earned his living mainly as an actor but also directed *Othello* [1952] and *Mr. Arkadin* [1955] under more or less precarious conditions. In addition, he worked in the theater (*The Unthinking Lobster* [1950, written & directed by Welles] in Paris; *Othello* [1951, directed by Welles] and *Moby Dick* [1955, adaptation written & directed by Welles] in London) and on British television, although most of the films he began for TV have never been edited or completed. (This includes the one about the triple murder in Lurs, France, in August of 1952. [In 1955 Welles directed a documentary for television focused on the Lurs case; it remained unfinished in his lifetime, yet almost all of his footage was found and included in a 1999 documentary titled *The Dominici Affair by Orson Welles*, directed by Christophe Cagnet.])

Finally, on the occasion of a television production of *King Lear* [1953, starring Welles], directed by Peter Brook, Orson Welles went back to the United States, where he returned to the theater in the same *King Lear*, which he performed in a wheelchair after having seriously sprained his ankle on the night of the dress rehearsal. Had the prodigal son returned to the fold? Whatever the case, Hollywood offered Welles a cautious peace in the form of two acting roles. The parts, it must be said, were rather mediocre ones in the following films: *Man in the Shadow* [1957, Jack Arnold, co-written by Welles] and *The Long, Hot Summer*

[1958, Martin Ritt], which has just been released in France after its appearance at the Cannes Festival.

The money Welles had earned as a film actor, as well as from his performances in a number of live television dramas, he used to make a movie in Mexico, not yet finished, on the theme of Cervantes' novel *Don Quixote* [1615]. This seventy-five to ninety-minute picture is intended for American television, but it may also be distributed to the cinemas.

[Principal photography on *Don Quixote* took place between 1957 and 1969; test footage was shot as early as 1955, second-unit photography was done as late as 1972, and Welles was working on the film intermittently until his death in 1985. *Don Quixote* was eventually edited by Jesús Franco and released in 1992.] Welles talks about the project as one of his few truly personal undertakings. (See the interview I conducted with him in the next issue of *Cahiers du cinéma* [no. 84, June 1958].) In any case, along with *Othello*, *Don Quixote* is the second motion picture he has made with his own money.

Scenario and Editing

For its part, *Man in the Shadow* is not, it seems, a project on which Welles claims full paternity. I suppose the situation can be roughly compared to that of *The Lady from Shanghai* [1947]: that is, Welles was the master of some elements in the making of each film and others were imposed on him. In a recent letter [May 24, 1958] in response to William Whitebait's review of *Touch of Evil* published in the *New Statesman* [May 10, 1958], Welles writes the following:

Excepting the Shakespearean experiments, I have only twice been given any voice at all as to the "level" of my subject matter. In my trunks stuffed with unproduced film scripts, there are no thrillers. When I make this sort of picture—for which I can pretend to no special interest or aptitude—it is not "for the money" (I support myself as an actor), but because of a greedy need to exercise, in some way, the function of my choice: the function of director. Quite baldly, this is my only choice. I have

to take whatever comes along from time to time, or accept the alternative, which is not working.

Still, we must distinguish between the *choice* of subject and its *treatment*. If, for example, unlike *The Lady from Shanghai*, *The Stranger* [1946] contains very little of Welles, it is because, aside from the subject itself, the scenario and even the cutting are not by him. By contrast, allowing for Welles's reservations concerning thrillers in the above-quoted passage, it should be obvious that the scenario of *Touch of Evil* is 100% Orson Welles. With regard to this picture's editing, however, it seems clear that he was not the one completely in charge. [The editors of *Touch of Evil* were Aaron Stell, Virgil Vogel, and Edward Curtiss; Walter Murch re-edited the film in 1998 based on Welles's documented intentions.]

In the *Cahiers* interview to which I refer above, as well as in his letter to William Whitebait of the *New Statesman*, Welles insists very much on the aesthetic importance of editing as a decisive creative stage in the making of any movie. We know, though, that the Hollywood habit is to remove the film from the director as soon as all the scenes have been shot and to entrust the editing to specialists in the studio. In the case of Welles, the producers found such a method doubly justified. It is for this reason that he is not the author of the final cut of *The Magnificent Ambersons* [1942] or of *The Lady from Shanghai*. Nor is he the author of the final cut of *Touch of Evil*, to which, according to Welles, several scenes were added that he had not personally directed. [Welles refers in the *New Statesman* letter of May 24, 1958, to "the wholesale re-editing of the film by the executive producer, a process of re-hashing in which I was forbidden to participate. Confusion was further confounded by several added scenes that I did not write and was not invited to direct."]

This long historical preamble was necessary, I think, to situate *Touch of Evil* precisely in the Welles filmography. Despite my reservations, it is indeed a "true" Welles film, yet one in which the artistic freedom and imaginative invention of the author are reduced to indirect manifestation through the conventional grid of a genre that he would

otherwise not have chosen. But is such a constraint at the level of initial choice a servitude really so binding, so decisive, when one realizes that, in the aesthetic realm, Orson Welles fortunately knows how to bring everything back to himself? To be sure, I am not one of those who argue it then follows that the “film noir” *Lady from Shanghai* is a better work than *Citizen Kane* [1941]. Taken by itself, as an autonomous work, even *The Magnificent Ambersons* is more important than the crime mystery *Mr. Arkadin*, but it is certain that, as a work by “the” Welles, the latter movie perhaps bears witness to greater personal inventiveness: that is, to a fuller, more coherent consciousness in both theme and style. Such a distinction is necessary to avoid two symmetrical critical errors: one, the belief that *Touch of Evil* is a greater film than *Citizen Kane*; and, two, the error that would prevent us from discerning, beyond the shallowness of the genre and its rhetoric, the deep design behind this new picture.

The hero of *Touch of Evil* is an old policeman, Capt. Hank Quinlan, worn out from years on the job and now involved in the obscure case of a car-bomb explosion—a case that will place him in conflict with one of his young Mexican colleagues. The action takes place in a small border town straddling the United States and Mexico. The Mexican narcotics officer, Miguel “Mike” Vargas, who decides to enter the case against the wishes of the grizzled local veteran, happens to be on his honeymoon. During the investigation, he quickly runs up against the bad will of Quinlan and the threats of local mobsters, led by a certain Uncle Joe Grandi. These threats, though they fail to scare Vargas, then naturally target his wife. Soon he comes to realize that Quinlan’s policing methods are most suspicious, for they visibly lead the captain to fabricate evidence against the main suspect in this particular crime—as he has done in many others.

In the name of the law and of professional ethics, therefore, Vargas decides to accuse, unmask, and destroy Quinlan. To defend himself, the latter does not shy away from the most abominable sort of blackmail: with the complicity of the scoundrel Grandi, Quinlan moves Vargas’s wife from her Mexican hotel to a remote American motel and orders a complicated orgy to be simulated. The young woman is found naked, drugged, and unconscious at the scene, along with the body of

the double-crossed Grandi, whom Quinlan has strangled. He hopes that after such a scandal, his inconvenient Mexican colleague will have no choice except to clear out or else be completely discredited. But this time the captain has gone too far: his oldest friend and faithful partner, Pete Menzies, finally disgusted with his boss's own criminal behavior, helps Vargas to expose Quinlan thanks to a subterfuge the details of which I will omit here, for the viewer's benefit, without weakening my critical argument.

The Characters

Looked at hastily and merely on its surface, this story seems to oppose the good, honest, and democratic policeman to the corrupt cop ready to make any compromise and fabricate any scheme to ensnare a culprit. Quinlan's professional ignominy is further aggravated by a disgusting bigotry that the local Mexican population provides him with the opportunity to exercise. But such Manichaeism in the first degree gets turned around, or is reversed, if we pay a little more attention to the script and the characters. For Quinlan is not really the rogue cop. He does not benefit from his investigations; and, anyway, he is convinced of the guilt of the people whom he has convicted on false evidence.

Without him, these culprits would therefore have gone free. To the logic and intelligence of his Mexican colleague, Quinlan opposes, in the name of the people, the intuition and instinct that guarantee the accuracy of his diagnosis. If he manufactures evidence, it is only in order to send the criminal to prison or the electric chair. Physically monstrous, is Quinlan morally so as well? You have to answer yes and no! Yes, since he is capable of committing crimes, not just from a higher moral point of view, but also in his own defense. No, since he is at least in some ways above Vargas, the smart, truthful, and just man who is nonetheless ever oblivious to a sense of moral, even metaphysical, life—a life that I will call Shakespearian.

These privileged beings, then, must not be judged according to common law. They are both weaker and stronger than others. Weaker, as in the case of the Irish sailor Michael O'Hara [played by Welles] of *The Lady from Shanghai*, who admits the following at the start of the

picture: "When I start out to make a fool of myself, there's very little that can stop me. If I'd known where it would end, I'd never let anything start." Yet how much greater *is* O'Hara, or Hank Quinlan, because he is in direct communication with the real reasons behind things, or, must we say, with God? It is such ambiguity that ultimately has dominated the entire *oeuvre* of Orson Welles since *Citizen Kane*, an ambiguity wherein aesthetics, or beauty, is only the reverse of morality. Moreover, isn't such a duality the same one to be found in *Beauty and the Beast* [1946, Jean Cocteau]? Let's not be surprised, in addition, that both of Welles's Shakespearian films, *Macbeth* and *Othello*, are themselves two tragedies well in line with this double theme.

To this gallery of ambiguous heroes, one would of course have to add those virtual ones of the films that Welles would have liked to shoot and, above all, one that he acted: Captain Ahab in *Moby Dick* [1956, John Huston]. It should be no mystery, for this reason, that the subject of *Don Quixote* was close to his heart, since the fundamental duality of moral life is physically expressed in the duality of the novel's protagonists: the tall, thin, (idealistic) Quixote and the fat, squat (world-weary) Sancho Panza. It is no coincidence that the character who has most surely popularized Welles as an actor is similarly drawn: Harry Lime of *The Third Man* [1949]. There is no need to investigate the practical part Welles played in *The Third Man* to understand that the final product belongs more to him than to Carol Reed, the director. Although his performance seems to last a total of only ten minutes, Welles obviously polarizes through his character all the moral issues of this film as if they were iron filings along the spectrum of a magnet.

It is in light of Harry Lime that we must also understand Hank Quinlan, yet I dare say that the dialectic of good and evil in Quinlan is more accomplished and more daring because the beauty of Lime, his archangelic splendor, has something almost superhuman about it. From this point of view, Quinlan has nothing on him. A former alcoholic (who relapses in the course of the picture), ugly and obese, sucking on sweets to resist the temptation of whisky, this particular archangel is no more than a poor devil who applies his derisive genius to the most ignoble of tasks. Welles, this time around, gives no chance to his

character; he knows that the public will condemn him. There can be no obvious respect or admiration attached to the evil he commits. We're no longer talking about the beauty of someone like Harry Lime, but instead about something akin to innocence, to a kind of secret superiority.

A Bit of Monotony

As for *mise-en-scène*, I'm not sure whether *Touch of Evil* is missing the editing, the strict tempo, that Welles alone could have given to any one sequence of shots, but for the rest—the actual framing and the direction of the actors—the film is good work on his part. Starting with *Mr. Arkadin*, he alone advanced the use of the wide-angle lens, with its short focal length (in this instance, 18.5mm), which has the peculiar quality of providing perfect depth of field at the same time as it substantially extends perspective. It follows that the vanishing point of any one setting is violently distorted and that the movements of the characters along the axis of the camera are acutely accelerated. In this universe as re-created in an imaginary space and according to a kind of magical geometry, Welles naturally has an interest in moving his actors around so as to exploit the efficiency of the whole process.

In *Touch of Evil*, such movement always seems psychologically likely or at least just. Nevertheless, in response to it I admit to having felt a certain sense of monotony, and to not being fully persuaded of the need for the exclusive use here of the 18.5-millimeter lens. The effect thus obtained, as convincing as it is sometimes, seems to have diverted the director from the search for other forms of inventiveness. By comparison, *The Lady from Shanghai* had a wonderful visual variety. But Orson Welles does not hide the fact that his choice in this case was mostly determined by the taste for experimentation: "I am working, and have worked, with the 18.5mm lens solely because other filmmakers haven't used it.... I don't prefer the 18.5 lens; I am just the only one who has explored its possibilities" (*Cahiers* interview cited, June 1958). What seduces him about the 18.5-millimeter lens, then, is its novelty. For Welles, it therefore comes down to exploiting any and all unexploited resources of the cinema, while the effects used—or imposed on him—in *The Lady from Shanghai* had nothing more to teach him.

We know, furthermore, that Welles does not like widescreen cinematography precisely because its various formats—CinemaScope, Panavision, Cinerama—lead to an extreme technical limitation in the application of optics. Paradoxically, the old, classical framing, which was in fact more versatile, now seems artificial and rigged. According to Welles himself, “The old camera permits the use of a range of visual conventions as removed from ‘realism’ as grand opera. This is a language, not a bag of tricks. If it is now a dead language, as a candid partisan of the old eloquence, I must face the likelihood that I shall not again be able to put it to the service of any theme of my own choosing” [Welles letter of May 24, 1958, in response to Whitebait’s review in the *New Statesman*].

Orson Welles is out of luck, I must say. *Touch of Evil* has been released in Paris under the most abominable conditions—at only one theater!—and a third of its height has been truncated under the pretext of panoramic framing. Because I have seen the film in this version and in the one Welles intended, I regret to tell the reader that what’s now on display is a massacre ... (*France-Observateur*, June 4, 1958)

Sheepishly, *The Sheepman*

Year in, year out, the critics guiltily make mention of half a dozen, somewhat ambitious westerns just so they can showcase their awareness of a genre that is more out-of-repute than despised. In this way, every summer over the last ten years or so, one of the season's masterpieces quickly gets buried by the anonymity of an "exclusive" engagement in a neighborhood or provincial cinema. In 1957, such a fate befell the western *Seven Men from Now* [1956, Budd Boetticher], with Randolph Scott; now it's the turn of George Marshall's *The Sheepman* [1958]—probably the best western I've seen in months, if not years.

This is an entertainment, no doubt, and the film does not hide it, but there is no reason to give less praise to an entertaining western than to an American comedy. In addition, isn't *The Sheepman* really *more* of a comedy, given that the themes and setting of the traditional western seem here to furnish the background material more than to present the matter at hand? For this is the story, above all, of an absurd stubbornness. Against all logic, against his own very interest, Jason Sweet (Glenn Ford) has decided to raise sheep in an area where cattle farming is the norm. The cowboys despise the shepherds, and the sheep is a base animal that degrades the cow pastures. In his new venture, the newcomer sees everyone pitted against him, especially a certain "colonel" who appears to be the king of cow country. We know what that means in any western. It is more ludicrous than improbable that a man such as Mr. Sweet, alone, can fatten his sheep while everyone clamors for their demise as well as that of their shepherd. One suspects, however, that he will have to pay a price for his challenge to the prevailing order—or in any event a few sheep, which he has gone so far as to transport to this place by loading them onto and off a train.

An Extraordinary Atmosphere

But logic does not account for the charm of this movie. Above all else, the tone does, with its casual humor, intelligent yet not intellectual, which presupposes a superior knowledge of the resources of the western genre—less to serve those resources than for other purposes, as I suggest above. The humor in *The Sheepman* is itself served by dazzling dialogue worthy of the wonderful American sound comedies—dialogue that is highlighted by the indescribable vocal quality of Shirley MacLaine [as Dell Payton, the romantic interest first of the colonel, then of Sweet]. Alas, those who see only the dubbed version will lose in aural or phonic humor what they gain in an understanding of the words spoken. However, all these qualities, already unusual, pale beside the *mise-en-scène* and the performances of the actors (which, incredibly, are relaxed and concerted at a time). What happens, as a result, is that, even in the picture's least important scenes, an extraordinary atmosphere obtains where anything can happen and indeed does happen. When it does, we say that we had been expecting it all along, yet that, at the same time, we could conceive of an alternative occurrence! I recommend, from this point of view, the sequence of the party at the colonel's ranch.

Some attention must now be paid to the tenets of the *auteur* theory. Since 1932, George Marshall has directed a good forty films, the majority of which are westerns; indeed, he was in charge of one of the rarest successes of its kind, *Destry Rides Again* [1939], a western released in France immediately after the war under the title *Femme ou démon* [*Woman or Demon*]. From a 1930 novel by Max Brand [a.k.a. Frederick Schiller Faust], this humorous classic featured a famous battle of the sexes in which Marlene Dietrich works her peculiar magic; opposite her, James Stewart played a deputy sheriff who paradoxically refuses to strap on a gun despite the fact that he is an expert marksman. Marshall remade *Destry Rides Again* in 1954 under the title *Destry*, and from this we can probably deduce that in *The Sheepman*, given all his previous, traditional westerns, Marshall again seized upon the occasion to reframe the ideal western through the lens of humor—humor in the situations, the dialogue, and the acting. The presence of Shirley MacLaine here,

therefore, is no less significant than that of Marlene Dietrich in *Destry Rides Again*.

These happy surprises, we must agree, were not expected from the American cinema. Among filmmakers here in France, Henri-Georges Clouzot [1907-77] is always Henri-Georges Clouzot; André Berthomieu [1903-60] is always André Berthomieu; and Yves Allégret [1905-87] reveals again and again only one artistic self. Be it a success or a failure, an ambitious European picture by one of these men remains ambitious *and* commercial. Yet the Hollywood system, so often restrictive and adversarial, is also generating miracles of this kind. And not always by mistake or through a failure of the system, but, on the contrary—as I think is the case here—through a still rarer game of perfect conjuncture between the machinery of industry and the mechanics of robotics, in which the robot suddenly becomes animated and becomes smarter than his immediate masters and even his original engineer. (*France-Observateur*, August 28, 1958)

The Perils of Perri: *A True-Life Fantasy*

The reader may be surprised that I am conferring the honor of criticism on a movie like *A True-Life Fantasy: Perri* [1957, Paul Kenworthy & Ralph Wright], which normally would get only a few lines in a magazine (such as this one) that tends to reserve its columns for films of greater aesthetic interest. I write here about *Perri* because this latest production from Walt Disney, even if it's the kind of picture that typically does not appeal to me, seems to propose important subjects for consideration whatever its defects may be. In any case, my review will be a continuation of reflections I had previously devoted, in *Cahiers du cinéma* of December 1956, to two other works: *The Secret of Magic Island* [1957, Jean Tourane] and *The Red Balloon* [1956, Albert Lamorisse].

In order to avoid repetition, I recommend this article to the reader interested in the issues treated here, but I shall nevertheless summarize the essence of my argument. Contrasting the film by Jean Tourane with the one by Albert Lamorisse, I tried to show that the first necessarily consisted of “found” editing, while *The Red Balloon* was creatively cut like any movie drama. The opposition between such editing and cutting resides in the fact that the “actions” and “feelings” of Tourane’s animals were not spontaneously produced in front of the camera, but rather illusorily created from scratch out of random, pre-recorded footage. The inevitable result in *The Secret of Magic Island* was thus a kind of internal or “inside” editing, while in Lamorisse’s picture the cutting remained external, from actual footage of the performers (including the balloon) in action, as would be the case in any continuously filmed drama later cut to continuity.

To this series of reflections on my part, *Perri* itself now adds significant food for thought, as it reduces all similar such films to the level of a sketch, including everything previously done by Walt Disney. From the point of view of sheer content, *Perri* is a continuation of all the movies made up to now about animal life, particularly as exemplified by the Disney *True-Life Adventures* series [1948-60] but also as represented by documentaries from various other nations, especially the Soviet Union and Japan. *Perri*, however, presents us with the novelty of being “fictionalized,” not from the point of view of a man as in *The Great Adventure* [1953, Arne Sucksdorff], but from the perspective of an animal: in this case a little squirrel that we follow from her birth to her ... marriage. That is to say, we are engaged here in full anthropomorphism, which is not surprising coming from Disney, but it still calls for comment. The previous *True-Life Adventures* films, including *Water Birds* [1952, Ben Sharpsteen] and *The Living Desert* [1953, James Algar], were also criticized for their anthropomorphism, but in the case of these two works, the anthropomorphism was far more humorous than sentimental. Most of the time, the human metaphors aimed at a comic, even grotesque effect, and in general the gags had a rhythm to them that was synchronized with music, just as in the animated cartoons of old.

In any case, it was for Walt Disney to find in nature his own aesthetic of animation. So much so that, with movies like *Bambi* [1942, David Hand], *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad* [1949, Jack Kinney], *Cinderella* [1950, Clyde Geronimi, Hamilton Luske, & Wilfred Jackson], and *Lady and the Tramp* [1955, Clyde Geronimi, Hamilton Luske, & Wilfred Jackson], which represented the culmination of an evolutionary period, Disney could not get beyond the animated depiction of nature—a depiction-cum-imitation that he managed so well. Having thus made nature as realistic as possible, in animated form, it only remained for him to progress symmetrically to the opposite end of the spectrum. We know the fascinating theory of anti-matter, which supposes the existence of a mirror universe whose reality is vigorously canceling out our own. Well, one can say the same of Disney productions, conceived as they are in front of mirrors where the big boss’s animators discover animal likenesses in themselves. Once

composed of animated, man-like dogs or ducks, the Disney pictures today are composed of humane ducks and avuncular bears—that is to say, of real animals that seem to imitate Walt Disney himself when they look at their mirror images in pools of water.

However, this analogical symmetry could be pushed even further than one might suspect. We once had good reason to denounce nature's imitation of Walt Disney, but today we are faced with a hierarchy of such imitations. The result is that we now have to acknowledge the unsuspected charms of *Water Birds*, since these charms revealed to *Perri* what Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, and the *Silly Symphonies* [1929-39] from animation's Golden Age had revealed to *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* [1937, David Hand] and *Cinderella*. To wit: in the *True-Life Adventures* series, Disney reproduces the evolution that led him from the cartoon short founded on comic-burlesque synchronism to full-length animation conceived in something like emotional marshmallow, and subsequently to sentimental realism as enacted by animals. Just as this aesthetic progression was accompanied by technical improvements, even if it did not result from them, so too was the evolution from *The Living Desert* to *A True-Life Fantasy: Perri* accomplished by the passage from “found” editing to creative cutting.

Poor Jean Tourane, ingenuously confessing his ambition, in *The Secret of Magic Island*, to make a Disney picture with live animals! But his very craftsmanship condemned him to resort to the convenience of “found” editing, whatever its rough edges. In any event, he would have needed a ton of equipment, and the technique to go with it, to succeed in achieving, spontaneously in nature *or* the studio, what had been accomplished on the animation tables of the movie factories. Let us nevertheless agree that the result in Tourane's film, if not entirely admirable, is at least somewhat astounding. *Water Birds* and *The Living Desert* themselves signified only the display of shooting prowess; the rest was, as in *The Secret of Magic Island*, a matter of editing of previously filmed material.

Here, finally, in *A True-Life Fantasy: Perri*, it is not the cinema, through editing, that lends to animals the behavioral characteristics of men, but the animals themselves who take on such behavior: by acting

in front of the camera according to the very kind of predetermination that could preside over a dramatic sequence in a cartoon. You read correctly. When the cruel marten pursues the nice little female squirrel and the male squirrel draws the attention of the wicked predator away from her, so as to save the mother of his children, this situation and its consequences are revealed to us with the same topographical clarity, the same spatial realism, the same dramatic progression we would find in a scene played out by human characters in a full-length motion picture. Even better: when, after a long and arduous pursuit through the forest, the marten catches up with another squirrel, the viewer awaits with almost intolerable anxiety the moment when the sequence will culminate in the capture and slaughter of the small rodent. This moment indeed arrives, but, to protect our delicate sensibilities, the marten seizes and devours the squirrel out of sight, behind a large rock.

I appeal to readers who will have the courage to go see *Perri* to tell me if I exaggerating or even lying, but I do not think that this example is the bravura piece of the film. It would be necessary to quote a hundred of them, no less stunning. When, for instance, Perri is pursued by a wildcat that climbs up the tree where she has taken refuge, at the same time as a vulture or eagle threatens her from above, it happens that we have in the same visual plane three animals. This incredible sequence is then topped by the one in which we see the Perri dislodged from an unused bird's nest in a tree, where she has taken refuge, by the savage gnawing of a beaver that is trying to fell the same tree for his own purposes. We imagine that a fitting montage could give us the perfect illusion of the scene, for it would have been enough to connect a shot of the anxious, if not agitated, squirrel emerging from the nest with one of the beaver eating away at the base of the tree. But I think that Walt Disney is not content with easy solutions. So we will see at least once, in the same visual plane, the beaver, the tree, and the squirrel.

An image like this is already better, and now we come to the cutting. But there is cutting, and then there is cutting. The shot I described above is banal, yet it will be augmented by a high-angle shot from the point of view of Perri—that is to say, one taken from three or four meters *up the tree* and showing the beaver at the bottom,

continuing to work away coldly ... on the dislodgement of the camera itself. Well, some will say, it's dangerous to film a beaver sawing down a tree—up which you have climbed—without disturbing him in his work, but at least such a shot involves only the tree and the animal. But wait a minute ... the tree is wobbling badly and, in fact, the cameraman, along with his camera, will go down with it. Then, for a moment, in the corner of the screen on the left, Perri's coat becomes just a red flash on the paleness of bark, precisely what we need to prove to the audience that the squirrel has been there from the very beginning of the scene. This is not merely cutting ... it's cutting within the frame, through the use of light and color.

It goes without saying that these are not trained animals we are watching in *A True-Life Fantasy: Perri*. At best, familiarized with the presence of man and camera, they continue to live according to their habit, as if they were alone: this is how all the major animal documentaries proceed nowadays. But that is what is most surprising, since the animals seem to conform so freely to the scenario as written. Thus nature, which so often served as a model for Disney animators, now becomes identical with the very images it once inspired, according to the Wildean aphorism that life imitates art [from Oscar Wilde's 1889 essay "The Decay of Lying"]—even to the point where the narrator can indifferently call the animals by their movie monikers or by their natural names. When Perri meets a stag, for example, it is with spontaneity and without humor that the narrator exclaims: "Here's Bambi, king of the forest ... " If the wildcat and marten, for their part, are called by their common names in *Perri*, it is only because no cartoon has yet popularized them. *Snow White* and *Cinderella*, one will recall, included a whole complement of such small anonymous animals.

This assimilation of the first order of fiction—that of the real—to the second—that of fantasy—becomes total when it finds its coronation in Perri's dream. Anthropomorphic subjectivization is so naturally implicit by now that the viewer must remind himself to be surprised at being inside the consciousness of a little squirrel. The passage to the first person here is easy and smooth, and, bringing to the second order of fiction the fictionalization of the real through the device

of the dream, it reintroduces the cartoon to nature not only as a model but also as its own reality. The white rabbits playing in the moonlight are born from snowflakes and turn back into them; the animal that leaps may be photographically “real,” but, before touching the ground, it vanishes in a burst of small crystals. Admittedly, this is not the first time that animation has been mixed with live-action cinematography; Disney himself did it [for instance, in *The Reluctant Dragon* (1941), *The Three Caballeros* (1944), and *Song of the South* (1946)], yet the process finds its own justification, as well as a new efficiency, in *A True-Life Fantasy: Perri*. It is also significant that the trick in this film no longer consists, according to traditional technique, in making the animated figures contiguous with reality. They are not introduced into, or included in, the photographic environment next to the real characters of the animals; instead, the former *become* real or return to an animated state according to a coming-and-going that presupposes the reciprocity and integral ambiguity of this two-dimensional universe.

Has God for all eternity been plagiarizing Walt Disney, then? Unless Walt Disney is God! But, as some people say, God is not an artist... (*Cahiers du cinéma*, May 1958)

Film Credits & Directors' Filmographies

(in order of discussion)

***The Human Comedy* (1943)**

Director: Clarence Brown

Screenplay: Howard Estabrook & Herman J. Mankiewicz, from the 1943 novel of the same name by William Saroyan

Cinematographer: Harry Stradling

Editor: Conrad A. Nervig

Music: Herbert Stothart

Art Director: Cedric Gibbons

Costume Designer: Irene Lentz

Running time: 117 minutes

Format: 35mm, in black and white

Cast: Mickey Rooney (Homer Macauley), Frank Morgan (Willie Grogan), James Craig (Tom Spangler), Marsha Hunt (Diana Steed), Fay Bainter (Mrs. Macauley), Ray Collins (Mr. Macauley), Van Johnson (Marcus Macauley), Donna Reed (Bess Macauley), Jack Jenkins (Ulysses Macauley), Dorothy Morris (Mary Arena), John Craven (Tobey George), Ann Ayars (Mrs. Sandoval), Mary Nash (Miss Hicks), Henry O'Neill (Charles Steed), Katharine Alexander (Mrs. Steed), Alan Baxter (Brad Stickman), Darryl Hickman (Lionel), Barry Nelson (Fat), Rita Quigley (Helen Elliot), Clem Bevans (Henderson), Adeline DeWalt Reynolds (Librarian)

Clarence Brown (1890-1987)

Trilby (1915)

The Law of the Land (1917)

The Blue Bird (1918)

The Great Redeemer (1920)

The Last of the Mohicans (1920)

The Foolish Matrons (1921)

The Light in the Dark (1922)

Don't Marry for Money (1923)

The Acquittal (1923)

The Signal Tower (1924)

Butterfly (1924)

The Eagle (1925)

The Goose Woman (1925)

Smouldering Fires (1925)

Flesh and the Devil (1926)

Kiki (1926)

A Woman of Affairs (1928)

The Trail of '98 (1929)

Navy Blues (1929)

Wonder of Women (1929)

Anna Christie (1930)

Romance (1930)

Inspiration (1931)

Possessed (1931)

A Free Soul (1931)

Emma (1932)

Letty Lynton (1932)

The Son-Daughter (1932)

Looking Forward (1933)

Night Flight (1933)

Sadie McKee (1934)

Chained (1934)

Ab, Wilderness! (1935)

Anna Karenina (1935)

Wife vs. Secretary (1936)
The Gorgeous Hussy (1936)
Conquest (1937)
Of Human Hearts (1938)
Idiot's Delight (1939)
The Rains Came (1939)
Edison, the Man (1940)
Come Live with Me (1941)
They Met in Bombay (1941)
The Human Comedy (1943)
The White Cliffs of Dover (1944)
National Velvet (1944)
The Yearling (1946)
Song of Love (1947)
Intruder in the Dust (1949)
To Please a Lady (1950)
Angels in the Outfield (1951)
When in Rome (1952)
Plymouth Adventure (1952)

***The Great Dictator* (1940)**

Director: Charles Chaplin
Screenplay: Charles Chaplin
Cinematographers: Karl Struss, Roland Totheroh
Editors: Willard Nico, Harold Rice
Music: Charles Chaplin, Meredith Willson
Art Director: J. Russell Spencer
Running time: 125 minutes
Format: 35mm, in black and white
Cast: Charles Chaplin (Adenoid Hynkel, Dictator of Tomainia/Jewish barber), Paulette Goddard (Hannah), Maurice Moscovitch (Mr. Jaeckel), Emma Dunn (Mrs. Jaeckel), Bernard Gorcey (Mr. Mann), Paul Weigel (Mr. Agar), Chester Conklin (Barber's customer), Esther Michelson (Jewish woman), Jack Oakie (Benzino Napaloni, Dictator of Bacteria), Reginald Gardiner (Commander Schultz), Henry Daniell (Garbitsch,

Hynkel's Secretary of the Interior and Minister of Propaganda), Billy Gilbert (Herring, Hynkel's Minister of War), Grace Hayle (Madame Napaloni), Carter DeHaven (Bacterian ambassador), Peter Lynn (Commander of Storm Troopers)

Charles Chaplin (1889-1977)

The Kid (1921)

A Woman of Paris (1923)

The Gold Rush (1925)

The Circus (1928)

City Lights (1931)

Modern Times (1936)

The Great Dictator (1940)

Monsieur Verdoux (1947)

Limelight (1952)

A King in New York (1957)

A Countess from Hong Kong (1967)

***The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942)**

Director: Orson Welles

Screenplay: Orson Welles, from the 1918 novel of the same name by Booth Tarkington

Cinematographers: Stanley Cortez, Jack MacKenzie

Editors: Robert Wise, Jack Moss, Mark Robson

Music: Bernard Herrmann

Production Designer: Albert S. D'Agostino

Costume Designers: Edward Stevenson, Earl Leas

Running time: 88 minutes (original, 148 minutes)

Format: 35mm, in black and white

Cast: Joseph Cotten (Eugene Morgan), Dolores Costello (Isabel Amberson Minafer), Anne Baxter (Lucy Morgan), Tim Holt (George Minafer), Agnes Moorehead (Fanny Minafer), Ray Collins (Jack Amberson), Erskine Sanford (Roger Bronson), Richard Bennett (Major Amberson), Olive Ball (Mary, the maid), Jack Baxley (Reverend Smith), Bobby Cooper (George Minafer as a boy), Don Dillaway (Wilbur

Minafer), Mel Ford (Fred Kinney), J. Louis Johnson (Sam, the butler), Anne O'Neal (Mrs. Foster), Charles R. Phipps (Uncle John), Drew Roddy (Elijah), Dorothy Vaughan (Mrs. Johnson), Orson Welles (Narrator)

Orson Welles (1915-85)

Citizen Kane (1941)

The Magnificent Ambersons (1942)

The Stranger (1946)

The Lady from Shanghai (1947)

Macbeth (1948)

Othello (1952)

Mr. Arkadin (1955)

Touch of Evil (1958)

The Trial (1962)

Chimes at Midnight (1965)

The Immortal Story (1968)

***The Lost Weekend* (1945)**

Director: Billy Wilder

Screenplay: Charles Brackett & Billy Wilder, from the 1944 novel of the same name by Charles R. Jackson

Cinematographer: John F. Seitz

Editor: Doane Harrison

Music: Miklós Rózsa

Art Directors: Hans Dreier, Earl Hedrick

Costume Designer: Edith Head

Running time: 99 minutes

Format: 35mm, in black and white

Cast: Ray Milland (Don Birnam), Jane Wyman (Helen St. James),

Phillip Terry (Wick Birnam), Howard Da Silva (Nat), Doris Dowling

(Gloria), Frank Faylen ("Bim" Nolan, the nurse in the alcoholic ward),

Mary Young (Mrs. Deveridge), Anita Bolster (Mrs. Foley), Lilian

Fontaine (Mrs. St. James), Frank Orth (Cloakroom attendant at opera),

Lewis L. Russell (Mr. St. James), David Clyde (Dave), Helen Dickson

(Mrs. Frink), Eddie Laughton (Mr. Brophy), Craig Reynolds (George),
Max Wagner (Mike), Gisela Werbisek (Mrs. Wertheim)

Billy Wilder (1906-2002)

Mauvaise Graine, a.k.a. *Bad Seed* (1934)

The Major and the Minor (1942)

Five Graves to Cairo (1943)

Double Indemnity (1944)

The Lost Weekend (1945)

Death Mills (1945)

The Emperor Waltz (1948)

A Foreign Affair (1948)

Sunset Boulevard (1950)

Ace in the Hole (1951)

Stalag 17 (1953)

Sabrina (1954)

The Seven Year Itch (1955)

The Spirit of St. Louis (1957)

Love in the Afternoon (1957)

Witness for the Prosecution (1957)

Some Like It Hot (1959)

The Apartment (1960)

One, Two, Three (1961)

Irma la Douce (1963)

Kiss Me, Stupid (1964)

The Fortune Cookie (1966)

The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes (1970)

Avanti! (1972)

The Front Page (1974)

Fedora (1978)

Buddy Buddy (1981)

***The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946)**

Director: William Wyler

Screenplay: Robert E. Sherwood, from the 1945 novel *Glory for Me*, by MacKinlay Kantor

Cinematographer: Gregg Toland

Editor: Daniel Mandell

Music: Hugo Friedhofer

Art Directors: Perry Ferguson, George Jenkins

Costume Designer: Irene Sharaff

Running time: 172 minutes

Format: 35mm, in black and white

Cast: Myrna Loy (Milly Stephenson), Fredric March (Al Stephenson), Dana Andrews (Fred Derry), Teresa Wright (Peggy Stephenson), Virginia Mayo (Marie Derry), Cathy O'Donnell (Wilma Cameron), Hoagy Carmichael (Butch Engle), Harold Russell (Homer Parrish), Gladys George (Hortense Derry), Roman Bohnen (Pat Derry), Ray Collins (Mr. Milton), Minna Gombell (Mrs. Parrish), Walter Baldwin (Mr. Parrish), Steve Cochran (Cliff), Dorothy Adams (Mrs. Cameron), Don Beddoe (Mr. Cameron), Marlene Aames (Luella Parrish), Charles Halton (Prew), Ray Teal (Mr. Mollett), Howland Chamberlain (Thorpe), Dean White (Novak), Erskine Sanford (Bullard), Michael Hall (Rob Stephenson), Victor Cutler (Woody Merrill), Jimmy Ames (Jackie), Mary Arden (Miss Barbour), Harry Cheshire (Minister at Wedding), Claire Du Brey (Mrs. Talburt, Perfume Customer), Edward Earle (Steese), Ben Erway (Lou Latham), Pat Flaherty (Salvage Foreman), Ray Hyke (Gus, Salvage Worker), John Ince (Ryan), Teddy Infuhr (Dexter, Brat in Drugstore), Donald Kerr (Steve the Bartender), Joseph Milani (Giuseppe, Lucia's Restaurant Proprietor), Norman Phillips, Jr. (Clarence "Sticky" Merkle), Ruth Sanderson (Mrs. Garrett), Ralph Sanford (George H. Gibbons), John Tyrell (Angus, Butch's Waiter)

William Wyler (1902-81)

Lazy Lightning (1926)

The Stolen Ranch (1926)

Blazing Days (1927)

Shooting Straight (1927)

Hard Fists (1927)
The Border Cavalier (1927)
Desert Dust (1927)
Thunder Riders (1928)
Anybody Here Seen Kelly? (1928)
The Shakedown (1929)
The Love Trap (1929)
Hell's Heroes (1930)
The Storm (1930)
A House Divided (1931)
Tom Brown of Culver (1932)
Private Jones (1933)
Her First Mate (1933)
Counsellor at Law (1933)
Glamour (1934)
The Good Fairy (1935)
The Gay Deception (1935)
Barbary Coast (1935)
These Three (1936)
Dodsworth (1936)
Come and Get It (1936)
Dead End (1937)
Jezebel (1938)
Wuthering Heights (1939)
The Westerner (1940)
The Letter (1940)
The Little Foxes (1941)
Mrs. Miniver (1942)
The Memphis Belle: A Story of a Flying Fortress (1944)
The Fighting Lady (1944)
The Best Years of Our Lives (1946)
Thunderbolt (1947)
The Heiress (1949)
Detective Story (1951)
Carrie (1952)

Roman Holiday (1953)
The Desperate Hours (1955)
Friendly Persuasion (1956)
The Big Country (1958)
Ben-Hur (1959)
The Children's Hour (1961)
The Collector (1965)
How to Steal a Million (1966)
Funny Girl (1968)
The Liberation of L. B. Jones (1970)

***Crossfire* (1947)**

Director: Edward Dmytryk

Screenplay: John Paxton, from the 1945 novel *The Brick Foxhole*, by Richard Brooks

Cinematographer: J. Roy Hunt

Editor: Harry Gerstad

Music: Roy Webb

Art Directors: Albert S. D'Agostino, Alfred Herman

Running time: 86 minutes

Format: 35mm, in black and white

Cast: Robert Young (Capt. Finlay), Robert Mitchum (Sgt. Peter Keeley), Robert Ryan (Montgomery), Gloria Grahame (Ginny Tremaine), Paul Kelly (Mr. Tremaine), Sam Levene (Joseph Samuels), Jacqueline White (Mary Mitchell), Steve Brodie (Floyd Bowers), George Cooper (Cpl. Arthur Mitchell), Richard Benedict (Bill Williams), Richard Powers, a.k.a. Tom Keene (Dick, detective), William Phipps (Leroy), Lex Barker (Harry), Marlo Dwyer (Miss Lewis)

Edward Dmytryk (1908-99)

The Hawk (1935)

Million Dollar Legs (1939)

Television Spy (1939)

Emergency Squad (1940)

Golden Gloves (1940)

Mystery Sea Raider (1940)
Her First Romance (1940)
The Devil Commands (1941)
Under Age (1941)
Sweetheart of the Campus (1941)
The Blonde from Singapore (1941)
Secrets of the Lone Wolf (1941)
Confessions of Boston Blackie (1941)
Counter-Espionage (1942)
Seven Miles from Alcatraz (1942)
Hitler's Children (1943)
The Falcon Strikes Back (1943)
Captive Wild Woman (1943)
Behind the Rising Sun (1943)
Tender Comrade (1943)
Murder, My Sweet (1944)
Back to Bataan (1945)
Cornered (1945)
Till the End of Time (1946)
So Well Remembered (1947)
Crossfire (1947)
Obsession (1949)
Give Us This Day (1949)
The Sniper (1952)
Mutiny (1952)
Eight Iron Men (1952)
The Juggler (1953)
The Caine Mutiny (1954)
Broken Lance (1954)
The End of the Affair (1954)
Soldier of Fortune (1955)
The Left Hand of God (1955)
The Mountain (1956)
Raintree County (1957)
The Young Lions (1958)

The Blue Angel (1959)
Warlock (1959)
Walk on the Wild Side (1962)
The Reluctant Saint (1962)
The Carpetbaggers (1964)
Where Love Has Gone (1964)
Mirage (1965)
Alvarez Kelly (1966)
Anzio (1968)
Shalako (1968)
Bluebeard (1972)
The "Human" Factor (1975)
He Is My Brother (1976)

***It's a Wonderful Life* (1946)**

Director: Frank Capra

Screenplay: Frances Goodrich, Albert Hackett, & Frank Capra, from the 1944 short story "The Greatest Gift," by Philip Van Doren Stern

Cinematographers: Joseph Biroc, Joseph Walker

Editor: William Hornbeck

Music: Dimitri Tiomkin

Art Director: Jack Okey

Costume Designer: Edward Stevenson

Running time: 130 minutes

Format: 35mm, in black and white

Cast: James Stewart (George Bailey), Donna Reed (Mary Hatch Bailey), Henry Travers (Clarence Odbody), Lionel Barrymore (Mr. Potter), Thomas Mitchell (Uncle Billy Bailey), Beulah Bondi (Mrs. Bailey), Frank Faylen (Ernie Bishop), Ward Bond (Bert), Gloria Grahame (Violet Bick), H. B. Warner (Mr. Gower), Frank Albertson (Sam Wainwright), Todd Karns (Harry Bailey), Samuel S. Hinds (Pa Bailey), Virginia Patton (Ruth Dakin Bailey), Mary Treen (Cousin Tilly), Charles Williams (Cousin Eustace), Sara Edwards (Mrs. Hatch), Bill Edmunds (Mr. Martini), Lillian Randolph (Annie), Argentina Brunetti (Mrs. Martini), Sheldon Leonard (Nick)

Frank Capra (1897-1991)

The Strong Man (1926)

For the Love of Mike (1927)

Long Pants (1927)

Submarine (1928)

The Power of the Press (1928)

The Matinee Idol (1928)

Say It With Sables (1928)

That Certain Thing (1928)

So This Is Love? (1928)

The Way of the Strong (1928)

The Donovan Affair (1929)

The Younger Generation (1929)

Flight (1929)

Rain or Shine (1930)

Ladies of Leisure (1930)

Dirigible (1931)

The Miracle Woman (1931)

Platinum Blonde (1931)

Forbidden (1932)

American Madness (1932)

The Bitter Tea of General Yen (1933)

Lady for a Day (1933)

It Happened One Night (1934)

Broadway Bill (1934)

Mr. Deeds Goes to Town (1936)

Lost Horizon (1937)

You Can't Take It with You (1938)

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington (1939)

Meet John Doe (1941)

Arsenic and Old Lace (1944)

It's a Wonderful Life (1946)

State of the Union (1948)

Riding High (1950)

Here Comes the Groom (1951)

A Hole in the Head (1959)

Pocketful of Miracles (1961)

***Fourteen Hours* (1951)**

Director: Henry Hathaway

Screenplay: John Paxton, from the 1949 short story "The Man on the Ledge," by Joel Sayre

Cinematographer: Joe MacDonald

Editor: Dorothy Spencer

Music: Alfred Newman

Art Directors: Leland Fuller, Lyle Wheeler

Costume Designer: Edward Stevenson

Running time: 92 minutes

Format: 35mm, in black and white

Cast: Paul Douglas (Policeman Charlie Dunnigan), Richard Basehart (Robert Cosick), Barbara Bel Geddes (Virginia Foster), Debra Paget (Ruth), Agnes Moorehead (Christine Hill Cosick), Robert Keith (Paul E. Cosick), Howard Da Silva (Deputy Chief Moskar), Jeffrey Hunter (Danny Klempner), Martin Gabel (Dr. Strauss), Grace Kelly (Mrs. Louise Ann Fuller), Frank Faylen (Walter, room-service waiter), Jeff Corey (Police Sgt. Farley), James Millican (Police Sgt. Boyle), Donald Randolph (Dr. Benson)

Henry Hathaway (1898-1985)

Heritage of the Desert (1932)

Wild Horse Mesa (1932)

The Thundering Herd (1933)

Under the Tonto Rim (1933)

Sunset Pass (1933)

Man of the Forest (1933)

To the Last Man (1933)

The Witching Hour (1934)

The Last Round-Up (1934)

Now and Forever (1934)

The Lives of a Bengal Lancer (1935)
Peter Ibbetson (1935)
The Trail of the Lonesome Pine (1936)
Souls at Sea (1937)
Spawn of the North (1938)
The Real Glory (1939)
Johnny Apollo (1940)
Brigham Young (1940)
The Shepherd of the Hills (1941)
Sundown (1941)
China Girl (1942)
Wing and a Prayer (1944)
The House on 92nd Street (1945)
The Dark Corner (1946)
Kiss of Death (1947)
13 Rue Madeleine (1947)
Call Northside 777 (1948)
Down to the Sea in Ships (1949)
The Black Rose (1950)
The Desert Fox: The Story of Rommel (1951)
Fourteen Hours (1951)
Rawhide (1951)
Diplomatic Courier (1952)
Niagara (1953)
Garden of Evil (1954)
Prince Valiant (1954)
The Bottom of the Bottle (1956)
23 Paces to Baker Street (1956)
Legend of the Lost (1957)
From Hell to Texas (1958)
Woman Obsessed (1959)
Seven Thieves (1960)
North to Alaska (1960)
How the West Was Won (1962)
Circus World (1964)

The Sons of Katie Elder (1965)

Nevada Smith (1966)

The Last Safari (1967)

5 Card Stud (1968)

True Grit (1969)

Raid on Rommel (1971)

Shoot Out (1971)

Hangup (1974)

***A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951)**

Director: Elia Kazan

Screenplay: Tennessee Williams & Oscar Saul, from Williams' 1947 play of the same name

Cinematographer: Harry Stradling

Editor: David Weisbart

Music: Alex North

Art Director: Richard Day

Running time: 122 minutes

Format: 35mm, in black and white

Cast: Vivien Leigh (Blanche DuBois), Marlon Brando (Stanley Kowalski), Kim Hunter (Stella Kowalski), Karl Malden (Harold "Mitch" Mitchell), Rudy Bond (Steve Hull), Nick Dennis (Pablo Gonzales), Peg Hillias (Eunice Hull), Wright King (Newspaper Collector), Richard Garrick (A Doctor), Ann Dere (The Matron), Edna Thomas (The Mexican Woman), Mickey Kuhn (A Sailor)

Elia Kazan (1909-2003)

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn (1945)

Boomerang! (1947)

Gentleman's Agreement (1947)

Pinky (1949)

Panic in the Streets (1950)

A Streetcar Named Desire (1951)

Viva Zapata! (1952)

On the Waterfront (1954)

East of Eden (1955)

Baby Doll (1956)

A Face in the Crowd (1957)

Wild River (1960)

Splendor in the Grass (1961)

The Last Tycoon (1976)

***Detective Story* (1951)**

Director: William Wyler

Screenplay: Robert Wyler & Philip Yordan, from the 1949 play of the same name by Sidney Kingsley

Cinematographer: Lee Garmes

Editor: Robert Swink

Music: Miklós Rózsa

Art Directors: Earl Hedrick, Hal Pereira

Costume Designer: Edith Head

Running time: 103 minutes

Format: 35mm, in black and white

Cast: Kirk Douglas (Detective James McLeod), Eleanor Parker (Mary McLeod), William Bendix (Detective Lou Brody), Cathy O'Donnell (Susan Carmichael), George Macready (Dr. Karl Schneider), Horace McMahon (Lt. Monaghan), Gladys George (Miss Hatch), Joseph Wiseman (Charley Gennini, a burglar), Lee Grant (Shoplifter), Gerald Mohr (Tami Giacoppetti), Frank Faylen (Detective Gallagher), William Reynolds (Arthur Kindred), Michael Strong (Lewis Abbott), Luis Van Rooten (Joe Feinson), Bert Freed (Detective Dakis), Warner Anderson (Endicott Sims, lawyer), Grandon Rhodes (Detective O'Brien), William "Bill" Phillips (Detective Pat Callahan), Russell Evans (Patrolman Steve Barnes)

***Diplomatic Courier* (1952)**

Director: Henry Hathaway

Screenplay: Casey Robinson & Liam O'Brien, from the 1945 novel *Sinister Errand*, by Peter Cheyney

Cinematographer: Lucien Ballard

Editor: James B. Clark

Music: Sol Kaplan

Art Directors: John DeCuir, Lyle Wheeler

Costume Designer: Elois Jenssen

Running time: 97 minutes

Format: 35mm, in black and white

Cast: Tyrone Power (Mike Kells), Patricia Neal (Joan Ross), Hildegard Neff (Janine Betki), Stephen McNally (Col. Mark Cagle), Karl Malden (Sgt. Ernie Guevara), James Millican (Sam F. Carew), Stefan Schnabel (Rasumny Platov), Herbert Berghof (Arnov), Arthur Blake (Max Ralli), Helene Stanley (Airline stewardess), Michael Ansara (Ivan), Peter Coe (Zinski), Russ Conway (Bill), Lumsden Hare (Jacks), Alfred Linder (Cherenko), Tom Powers (Cherney), Stuart Randall (Butrick), Carleton Young (Brennan), Charles Buchinsky, a.k.a. Charles Bronson (Russian agent)

Monkey Business (1952)

Director: Howard Hawks

Screenplay: Harry Segall, Ben Hecht, Charles Lederer, I. A. L. Diamond

Cinematographer: Milton Krasner

Editor: William B. Murphy

Music: Leigh Harline

Art Directors: George Patrick, Lyle Wheeler

Costume Designer: William J. Travilla

Running time: 97 minutes

Format: 35mm, in black and white

Cast: Cary Grant (Dr. Barnaby Fulton), Ginger Rogers (Mrs. Edwina Fulton), Marilyn Monroe (Miss Lois Laurel), Charles Coburn (Mr. Oliver Oxley), Hugh Marlowe (Hank Entwistle), Henri Letondal (Dr. Jerome Kitzel), Robert Cornthwaite (Dr. Zoldeck), Larry Keating (G. J. Culverly), Douglas Spencer (Dr. Brunner), Esther Dale (Mrs. Rhinelander), George Winslow (Little Indian), George Eldredge (Mr. Peabody), Kathleen Freeman (Mrs. Brannigan), Emmett Lynn (Gus)

Howard Hawks (1896-1977)

The Road to Glory (1926)
Fig Leaves (1926)
The Cradle Snatchers (1927)
Paid to Love (1927)
A Girl in Every Port (1928)
Fazil (1928)
The Air Circus (1928)
Trent's Last Case (1929)
The Dawn Patrol (1930)
The Criminal Code (1931)
Scarface: Shame of a Nation (1932)
The Crowd Roars (1932)
Tiger Shark (1932)
Today We Live (1933)
The Prizefighter and the Lady (1933)
Viva Villa! (1934)
Twentieth Century (1934)
Barbary Coast (1935)
Ceiling Zero (1936)
The Road to Glory (1936)
Come and Get It (1936)
Bringing Up Baby (1938)
Only Angels Have Wings (1939)
His Girl Friday (1940)
Sergeant York (1941)
Ball of Fire (1941)
Air Force (1943)
The Outlaw (1943)
Corvette K-225 (1943)
To Have and Have Not (1944)
The Big Sleep (1946)
Red River (1948)
A Song Is Born (1948)
I Was a Male War Bride (1949)
The Big Sky (1952)

Monkey Business (1952)
Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (1953)
Land of the Pharaohs (1955)
Rio Bravo (1959)
Hatari! (1962)
Man's Favorite Sport? (1964)
Red Line 7000 (1965)
El Dorado (1967)
Rio Lobo (1970)

***Stalag 17* (1953)**

Director: Billy Wilder

Screenplay: Edwin Blum & Billy Wilder, from the 1951 play of the same name by Donald Bevan & Edmund Trzcinski

Cinematographer: Ernest Laszlo

Editor: George Tomasini

Music: Franz Waxman

Art Directors: Franz Bachelin, Hal Pereira

Costume Designer: Alan Sloane

Running time: 120 minutes

Format: 35mm, in black and white

Cast: William Holden (Sgt. J. J. Sefton), Don Taylor (Lt. Dunbar), Otto Preminger (Col. von Scherbach), Robert Strauss (Sgt. Stanislas "Animal" Kuzawa), Harvey Lembeck (Sgt. Harry Shapiro), Peter Graves (Sgt. Frank Price), Sig Ruman (Sgt. Johann Sebastian Schulz), Neville Brand (Duke), Richard Erdman (Sgt. "Hoffy" Hoffman), Michael Moore (Sgt. Manfredi), Peter Baldwin (Sgt. Johnson), Robinson Stone (Joey), Robert Shawley (Sgt. "Blondie" Peterson), William Pierson (Marko the Mailman), Gil Stratton (Clarence Harvey "Cookie" Cook, narrator), Jay Lawrence (Sgt. Bagradian), Erwin Kalser (Geneva Man), Paul Salata (Prisoner with Beard), Edmund Trzcinski ("Triz"), A. Gerald Singer (Steve, the Crutch)

***The Caine Mutiny* (1954)**

Director: Edward Dmytryk

Screenplay: Stanley Roberts & Michael Blankfort, from the 1951 novel of the same name by Herman Wouk

Cinematographer: Franz Planer

Editors: Henry Batista, William A. Lyon

Music: Max Steiner

Production Designer: Rudolph Sternad

Costume Designer: Jean Louis

Running time: 124 minutes

Format: 35mm, in color

Cast: Humphrey Bogart (Lt. Comdr. Philip Francis Queeg), José Ferrer (Lt. Barney Greenwald), Van Johnson (Lt. Steve Maryk), Fred MacMurray (Lt. Tom Keefer), Robert Francis (Ens. Willis Seward "Willie" Keith), May Wynn (May Wynn), Tom Tully (Lt. Comdr. William H. De Vriess), E. G. Marshall (Lt. Comdr. John Challee), Arthur Franz (Lt. JG H. Paynter, Jr.), Lee Marvin (Seaman/Petty Officer "Meatball"), Warner Anderson (Capt. Blakely), Claude Akins (Seaman "Horrible" Lugatch), Katherine Warren (Mrs. Keith, Ensign Keith's mother), Jerry Paris (Ens. Barney Harding), Steve Brodie (Chief Budge), Todd Karns (Stilwell), Whit Bissell (Lt. Comdr. Dickson, M.D.), James Best (Lt. JG Jorgensen), Joe Haworth (Ens. Carmody), Guy Anderson (Ens. Rabbit), James Edwards (Whittaker), Don Dubbins (Urban), David Alpert (Engstrand), Herbert Anderson (Ens. Rabbit), Don Dillaway (George), James Edwards (Whittaker), Joe Haworth (Ens. Carmody), Todd Karns (Petty Officer 1st Class Stillwell), Edward Laguna (Winston), Dayton Lummis (Uncle Lloyd), James Todd (Comdr. Lekvey)

The High and the Mighty (1954)

Director: William Wellman

Screenplay: Ernest K. Gann, from his 1953 novel of the same name

Cinematographer: Archie Stout

Editor: Ralph Dawson

Music: Dimitri Tiomkin

Art Director: Al Ybarra

Costume Designer: Gwen Wakeling

Running time: 147 minutes

Format: 35mm, in color

Cast: John Wayne (Dan Roman, First Officer), Claire Trevor (May Holst), Laraine Day (Lydia Rice), Robert Stack (John Sullivan, Captain), Jan Sterling (Sally McKee), Phil Harris (Ed Joseph), Ann Doran (Mrs. Clara Joseph), Robert Newton (Gustave Pardee), David Brian (Ken Childs), Paul Kelly (Donald Flaherty), Sidney Blackmer (Humphrey Agnew), Julie Bishop (Lillian Pardee), Pedro Gonzalez-Gonzalez (Gonzales, Amateur Radio Operator, *SS Cristobal Trader*), John Howard (Howard Rice), Wally Brown (Lenny Wilby, Navigator), William Campbell (Hobie Wheeler, Second Officer), John Qualen (José Locota), Paul Fix (Frank Briscoe), George Chandler (Ben Sneed, Far East Crew Chief, Honolulu), Joy Kim (Dorothy Chen), Michael Wellman (Toby Field), Douglas Fowley (Alsop, TOPAC Agent, Honolulu), Regis Toomey (Tim Garfield, TOPAC Operations Manager, San Francisco), Carl “Alfalfa” Switzer (Ens. Keim, USCG, ASR Pilot, Alameda), Robert Keys (Lt. Mowbray, USCG, ASR Pilot, Alameda), William Hopper (Roy, Sally McKee’s fiancé), William Schallert (TOPAC Dispatcher, San Francisco), Julie Mitchum (Mrs. Susie Wilby), Doe Avedon (Miss Spalding, Flight Attendant), Karen Sharpe (Nell Buck), John Smith (Milo Buck), Dorothy Ford (Mrs. Wilson), Douglas Kennedy (Boyd, Public Relations), Walter Reed (Mr. Field), Philip Van Zandt (Mr. Wilson)

William Wellman (1896-1975)

The Twins of Suffering Creek (1920)

The Man Who Won (1923)

Second Hand Love (1923)

Big Dan (1923)

Cupid’s Fireman (1923)

The Vagabond Trail (1924)

Not a Drum Was Heard (1924)

The Circus Cowboy (1924)

When Husbands Flirt (1925)

The Boob (1926)

You Never Know Women (1926)
The Cat's Pajamas (1926)
Wings (1927)
Ladies of the Mob (1928)
Beggars of Life (1928)
The Legion of the Condemned (1928)
Chinatown Nights (1929)
Woman Trap (1929)
The Man I Love (1929)
Young Eagles (1930)
Dangerous Paradise (1930)
Maybe It's Love (1930)
The Public Enemy (1931)
Other Men's Women (1931)
Night Nurse (1931)
The Star Witness (1931)
Safe in Hell (1931)
The Hatchet Man (1932)
So Big! (1932)
Frisco Jenny (1932)
The Purchase Price (1932)
Love Is a Racket (1932)
The Conquerors (1932)
Central Airport (1933)
Midnight Mary (1933)
Lilly Turner (1933)
Heroes for Sale (1933)
Wild Boys of the Road (1933)
College Coach (1933)
The President Vanishes (1934)
Stingaree (1934)
Looking for Trouble (1934)
Call of the Wild (1935)
Robin Hood of El Dorado (1936)
Small Town Girl (1936)

Tarzan Escapes (1936)
A Star Is Born (1937)
Nothing Sacred (1937)
Men with Wings (1938)
Beau Geste (1939)
The Light That Failed (1939)
Thunder Birds: Soldiers of the Air (1942)
Roxie Hart (1942)
The Great Man's Lady (1942)
Lady of Burlesque (1943)
The Ox-Bow Incident (1943)
Buffalo Bill (1944)
This Man's Navy (1945)
The Story of G.I. Joe (1945)
Gallant Journey (1946)
Magic Town (1947)
The Iron Curtain (1948)
Yellow Sky (1948)
Battleground (1949)
The Happy Years (1950)
The Next Voice You Hear ... (1950)
Across the Wide Missouri (1951)
Westward the Women (1951)
My Man and I (1952)
Island in the Sky (1953)
The High and the Mighty (1954)
Track of the Cat (1954)
Ring of Fear (1954)
Blood Alley (1955)
Good-bye, My Lady (1956)
Darby's Rangers (1958)
Lafayette Escadrille (1958)

***On the Waterfront* (1954)**

Director: Elia Kazan

Screenplay: Budd Schulberg, suggested by newspaper articles in the twenty-four part series "Crime on the Waterfront," written by Malcolm Johnson and published in the *New York Sun* in 1948

Cinematographer: Boris Kaufman

Editor: Gene Milford

Music: Leonard Bernstein

Art Director: Richard Day

Costume Designer: Anna Hill Johnstone

Running time: 108 minutes

Format: 35mm, in black and white

Cast: Marlon Brando (Terry Malloy), Eva Marie Saint (Edie Doyle), Karl Malden (Father Barry), Lee J. Cobb (Johnny Friendly, a.k.a. Michael J. Skelly), Rod Steiger (Charley "The Gent" Malloy), John Hamilton ("Pop" Doyle), Pat Henning ("Kayo" Dugan), James Westerfield (Big Mac), Leif Erickson (Glover), Tony Galento (Truck), Tami Mauriello (Tillio), John Heldabrand (Mott), Rudy Bond (Moose), Don Blackman (Luke), Arthur Keegan (Jimmy), Abe Simon (Barney), Martin Balsam (Gillette), Fred Gwynne (Slim), Thomas Handley (Tommy Collins), Anne Hegira (Mrs. Collins), Pat Hingle (Jocko), Zachary Charles (Dues collector), Dan Bergin (Sidney), Barry Macollum (Johnny's banker), Mike O'Dowd (Specs), Nehemiah Persoff (Cab driver)

***Broken Lance* (1954)**

Director: Edward Dmytryk

Screenplay: Philip Yordan & Richard Murphy, from the 1941 novel *I'll Never Go There Anymore*, by Jerome Weidman

Cinematographer: Joseph MacDonald

Editor: Dorothy Spencer

Music: Leigh Harline

Art Directors: Maurice Ransford, Lyle Wheeler

Costume Designer: Willam J. Travilla

Running time: 96 minutes

Format: 35mm, in color

Cast: Spencer Tracy as (Matt Devereaux), Robert Wagner (Joe Devereaux), Jean Peters (Barbara), Richard Widmark (Ben Devereaux),

Katy Jurado (Señora Devereaux), Hugh O'Brian (Mike Devereaux),
Eduard Franz (Two Moons), Earl Holliman (Denny Devereaux), E. G.
Marshall (Horace, the Governor), Carl Benton Reid (Clem Lawton),
Philip Ober (Van Cleve), Robert Burton (Mac Andrews), Robert Adler
(O'Reilly), Nacho Galindo (Francisco, the Cook), Julian Rivero
(Manuel)

Conquest of Space (1955)

Director: Byron Haskin

Screenplay: Chesley Bonestell, Willy Ley, Philip Yordan, Barré Lyndon,
George Worthing Yates, James O'Hanlon

Cinematographer: Lionel Lindon

Editor: Everett Douglas

Music: Nathan Van Cleave

Art Directors: Joseph MacMillan Johnson, Hal Pereira

Running time: 81 minutes

Format: 35mm, in color

Cast: Walter Brooke (Gen. Samuel T. Merritt), Eric Fleming (Capt.
Barney Merritt), Mickey Shaughnessy (Sgt. Mahoney), Phil Foster (Sgt.
Jackie Siegle), William Redfield (Roy Cooper), William Hopper (Dr.
George Fenton), Benson Fong (Sgt. Imoto), Ross Martin (Sgt. Andre
Fodor), Vito Scotti (Sanella), John Dennis (Donkersgoed), Michael Fox
(Elsbach), Joan Shawlee (Rosie), Iphigenie Catiglioni (Mrs. Heinz
Fodor)

Byron Haskin (1899-1984)

Matinee Ladies (1927)

Irish Hearts (1927)

Ginsberg the Great (1927)

Action in the North Atlantic (1943)

I Walk Alone (1948)

Man-Eater of Kumaon (1948)

Too Late for Tears (1949)

Treasure Island (1950)

Tarzan's Peril (1951)

Warpath (1951)
Silver City (1951)
Denver and Rio Grande (1952)
The War of the Worlds (1953)
Long John Silver (1954)
His Majesty O'Keefe (1954)
The Naked Jungle (1954)
Conquest of Space (1955)
The First Texan (1956)
The Boss (1956)
From the Earth to the Moon (1958)
The Little Savage (1959)
Jet Over the Atlantic (1959)
September Storm (1960)
Armored Command (1961)
Captain Sindbad (1963)
Robinson Crusoe on Mars (1964)
The Power (1968)

***The Racers* (1955)**

Director: Henry Hathaway

Screenplay: Charles Kaufman, from the 1953 novel *The Racer*, by Hans Ruesch

Cinematographer: Joseph MacDonald

Editor: James B. Clark

Music: Alex North

Art Directors: George Patrick, Lyle Wheeler

Costume Designer: Kay Nelson

Running time: 88 minutes

Format: 35mm, in color

Cast: Kirk Douglas (Gino Borgesa), Bella Darvi (Nicole), Gilbert Roland (Dell'Orro), Cesar Romero (Carlos Chavez), Lee J. Cobb (Maglio), Katy Jurado (Maria Chávez), Charles Goldner (Piero, mechanic), John Hudson (Michel Caron), George Dolenz (Count Salem), Agnès Laury (Toni), John Wengraf (Dr. Tabor), Norbert

Schiller (Dehlgreen, photographer), Ina Anders (Janka), Peter Brocco (Gatti), Gene Darcy (Rousillon), Francesco De Scaffa (Chata), Joseph Vitale (Dr. Bocci), Mel Welles (Fiori), Ben Wright (Dr. Seger), Frank Yaconelli (Luigi)

Bad Day at Black Rock (1954)

Director: John Sturges

Screenplay: Don McGuire & Millard Kaufman, from the 1947 short story "Bad Time at Honda," by Howard Breslin

Cinematographer: William C. Mellor

Editor: Newell P. Kimlin

Music: André Previn

Art Directors: Malcolm Brown, Cedric Gibbons

Running time: 81 minutes

Format: 35mm, in color

Cast: Spencer Tracy (John J. Macreedy), Robert Ryan (Reno Smith), Anne Francis (Liz Wirth), Dean Jagger (Sheriff Tim Horn), Walter Brennan (Doc Velie), John Ericson (Pete Wirth), Ernest Borgnine (Coley Trimble), Lee Marvin (Hector David), Russell Collins (Mr. Hastings), Walter Sande (Sam)

John Sturges (1910-92)

The Man Who Dared (1946)

Shadowed (1946)

Alias Mr. Twilight (1946)

For the Love of Rusty (1947)

Keeper of the Bees (1947)

The Sign of the Ram (1948)

Best Man Wins (1948)

The Walking Hills (1949)

The Magnificent Yankee (1950)

The Capture (1950)

Mystery Street (1950)

Right Cross (1950)

Kind Lady (1951)

The People Against O'Hara (1951)
The Girl in White (1952)
Jeopardy (1953)
Fast Company (1953)
Escape from Fort Bravo (1953)
Bad Day at Black Rock (1955)
Underwater! (1955)
The Scarlet Coat (1955)
Backlash (1956)
Gunfight at the O.K. Corral (1957)
Saddle the Wind (1958)
The Law and Jake Wade (1958)
The Old Man and the Sea (1958)
Last Train from Gun Hill (1959)
Never So Few (1959)
The Magnificent Seven (1960)
By Love Possessed (1961)
Sergeants 3 (1962)
A Girl Named Tamiko (1962)
The Great Escape (1963)
The Satan Bug (1965)
The Hallelujah Trail (1965)
Hour of the Gun (1967)
Ice Station Zebra (1968)
Marooned (1969)
Joe Kidd (1972)
Chino (1973)
McQ (1974)
The Eagle Has Landed (1976)

***East of Eden* (1955)**

Director: Elia Kazan

Screenplay: Paul Osborn, from the 1952 novel of the same name by John Steinbeck

Cinematographer: Ted D. McCord

Editor: Own Marks

Music: Leonard Rosenman

Art Directors: James Basevi, Malcolm C. Bert

Costume Designer: Anna Hill Johnstone

Running time: 115 minutes

Format: 35mm, in color

Cast: Julie Harris (Abra), James Dean (Cal Trask), Raymond Massey (Adam Trask), Burl Ives (Sam the Sheriff), Richard Davalos (Aron Trask), Jo Van Fleet (Kate), Albert Dekker (Will Hamilton), Lois Smith (Anne), Harold Gordon (Gustav Albrecht), Nick Dennis (Rantani), Timothy Carey (Joe), Jack Carr (Charlie), Lonny Chapman (Roy Turner), Richard Garrick (Dr. Edwards), Rose Plumer (Rose), Mario Siletti (Mr. Piscora)

Hallelujah (1929)

Director: King Vidor

Screenplay: King Vidor, Ransom Rideout, Richard Schayer, Wanda Tuchock

Cinematographer: Gordon Avil

Editors: Hugh Wynn, Anton Stevenson

Music: Eva Jessye

Art Director: Cedric Gibbons

Costume Designer: Henrietta Frazer

Running time: 109 minutes

Format: 35mm, in black and white

Cast: Daniel L. Haynes (Zeke), Nina Mae McKinney (Chick), William E. Fountaine (Hot Shot), Harry Gray (Parson), Fannie Belle DeKnight (Mammy), Everett McGarrity (Spunk), Victoria Spivey (Missy Rose), Milton Dickerson (Johnson Kid), Robert Couch (Johnson Kid), Walter Tait (Johnson Kid), Sam McDaniel (Adam), Dixie Jubilee Singers

King Vidor (1894-1982)

The Turn in the Road (1919)

Better Times (1919)

The Other Half (1919)

Poor Relations (1919)
The Jack-Knife Man (1920)
The Family Honor (1920)
The Sky Pilot (1921)
Love Never Dies (1921)
Conquering the Woman (1922)
Woman, Wake Up (1922)
The Real Adventure (1922)
Dusk to Dawn (1922)
Peg o' My Heart (1922)
The Woman of Bronze (1923)
Three Wise Fools (1923)
Wild Oranges (1924)
Happiness (1924)
Wine of Youth (1924)
His Hour (1924)
The Wife of the Centaur (1924)
Proud Flesh (1925)
The Big Parade (1925)
La Bohème (1926)
Bardelys the Magnificent (1926)
The Crowd (1928)
The Patsy, a.k.a. *The Politic Flapper* (1928)
Show People (1928)
Hallelujah (1929)
Not So Dumb (1930)
Billy the Kid (1930)
Street Scene (1931)
The Champ (1931)
Bird of Paradise (1932)
Cynara, a.k.a. *I Was Faithful* (1932)
The Stranger's Return (1933)
Our Daily Bread (1934)
The Wedding Night (1935)
So Red the Rose (1935)

The Texas Rangers (1936)
Stella Dallas (1937)
The Citadel (1938)
Northwest Passage (1940)
Comrade X (1940)
H.M. Pulham, Esq. (1941)
An American Romance (1944)
Duel in the Sun (1946)
A Miracle Can Happen, a.k.a. *On Our Merry Way* (1948)
The Fountainhead (1949)
Beyond the Forest (1949)
Lightning Strikes Twice (1951)
Japanese War Bride (1952)
Ruby Gentry (1952)
Man Without a Star (1955)
War and Peace (1956)
Solomon and Sheba (1959)

***Blackboard Jungle* (1955)**

Director: Richard Brooks
 Screenplay: Richard Brooks, from the 1954 novel of the same name by Evan Hunter (a.k.a. Ed McBain)
 Cinematographer: Russell Harlan
 Editor: Ferris Webster
 Music: Scott Bradley, Charles Wolcott, Max C. Freedman, Jimmy DeKnight, Willis Holman, Jenny Lou Carson
 Art Directors: Randall Duell, Cedric Gibbons
 Running time: 101 minutes
 Format: 35mm, in black and white
 Cast: Glenn Ford (Richard Dadier), Sidney Poitier (Gregory W. Miller), Vic Morrow (Artie West), Anne Francis (Anne Dadier), Louis Calhern (Jim Murdock), Margaret Hayes (Lois Judby Hammond), John Hoyt (Mr. Warneke), Richard Kiley (Joshua Y. Edwards), Emile Meyer (Mr. Halloran), Warner Anderson (Dr. Bradley), Basil Ruysdael (Prof. A. R. Kraal), Dan Terranova (Belazi), Rafael Campos (Pete V. Morales), Paul

Mazursky (Emmanuel Stoker), Horace McMahon (Detective), Jameel Farah, a.k.a. Jamie Farr (Santini), Danny Dennis (De Lica), David Alpert (Lou Savoldi), Henny Backus (Miss Brady), Doyle Baker (Wilson), Richard Deacon (Mr. Stanley), John Erman (Daly), Robert Foulk (George Katz), Paul Hoffman (Mr. Lefkowitz), Carl Kress (Peewee), Jerry Mickelsen (Krauss), Peter Miller (Joe Murray), Jimmy Murphy (Frank Adams), Dorothy Neumann (Miss Panucci), Gerald Phillips (Carter), Chris Randall (Levy), Yoshiro Tomita (Tomita), Martha Wentworth (Mrs. Brophy), Jerry Wynne (Murphy)

Richard Brooks (1912-92)

Crisis (1950)

The Light Touch (1951)

Deadline-U.S.A. (1952)

Battle Circus (1953)

Take the High Ground! (1953)

Flame and the Flesh (1954)

The Last Time I Saw Paris (1954)

Blackboard Jungle (1955)

The Last Hunt (1956).

The Catered Affair (1956)

Something of Value (1957)

The Brothers Karamazov (1958)

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (1958)

Elmer Gantry (1960)

Sweet Bird of Youth (1962)

Lord Jim (1965)

The Professionals (1966)

In Cold Blood (1967)

The Happy Ending (1969)

\$ (1971)

Bite the Bullet (1975)

Looking For Mr. Goodbar (1977)

Wrong Is Right (1982)

Fever Pitch (1985)

***Rebel Without a Cause* (1955)**

Director: Nicholas Ray

Screenplay: Stewart Stern, Irving Shulman, Nicholas Ray

Cinematographer: Ernest Haller

Editors: William H. Ziegler, James Moore

Music: Leonard Rosenman

Production Designer: Malcolm C. Bert

Costume Designer: Moss Mabry

Running time: 111 minutes

Format: 35mm, in color

Cast: James Dean (Jim Stark), Natalie Wood (Judy), Sal Mineo (John “Plato” Crawford), Jim Backus (Frank Stark), Ann Doran (Mrs. Carol Stark), Corey Allen (Buzz Gunderson), William Hopper (Judy’s father), Rochelle Hudson (Judy’s mother), Edward Platt (Ray Fremick), Frank Mazzola (Crunch), Dennis Hopper (Goon), Jack Grinnage (Moose), Virginia Brissac (Grandma Stark), Marietta Canty (Crawford family maid), Ian Wolfe (Dr. Minton, astronomy professor), Beverly Long (Helen), Nick Adams (Chick), Steffi Sidney (Mil), Jack Simmons (Cookie), John Righetti (Big Rig), Robert Foulk (Gene), Tom Bernard (Harry), Clifford Morris (Cliff), Jimmy Baird (Beau)

Nicholas Ray (1911-79)

They Live By Night (1948)

A Woman’s Secret (1949)

Knock on Any Door (1949)

Roseanna McCoy (1949)

Born To Be Bad (1950)

In a Lonely Place (1950)

On Dangerous Ground (1951)

Flying Leathernecks (1951)

The Lusty Men (1952)

Johnny Guitar (1954)

Run for Cover (1955)

Rebel Without a Cause (1955)

Hot Blood (1956)
Bigger Than Life (1956)
The True Story of Jesse James (1957)
Bitter Victory (1957)
Wind Across the Everglades (1958)
Party Girl (1958)
The Savage Innocents (1960)
King of Kings (1961)
55 Days at Peking (1963)
We Can't Go Home Again (1976)

***The Last Command* (1955)**

Director: Frank Lloyd
Screenplay: Warren Duff, Sy Bartlett
Cinematographer: Jack A. Marta
Editor: Tony Martinelli
Music: Max Steiner
Art Director: Frank Arrigo
Costume Designer: Adele Palmer
Running time: 110 minutes
Format: 35mm, in color
Cast: Sterling Hayden (Jim Bowie), Anna Maria Alberghetti (Consuelo de Quesada), Richard Carlson (William B. Travis), Arthur Hunnicutt (Davy Crockett), Ernest Borgnine (Mike Radin), J. Carrol Naish (Gen. Antonio Lopez de Santa Ana), Ben Cooper (Jeb Lacey), John Russell (Lt. Almaron Dickinson), Virginia Grey (Mrs. Dickinson), Jim Davis (Ben Evans), Eduard Franz (Lorenzo de Quesada), Otto Kruger (Stephen F. Austin), Russell Simpson (Parson), Roy Roberts (Dr. Summerfield), Slim Pickens (Abe), Hugh Sanders (Sam Houston), Rico Alaniz (Tomas), Argentina Brunetti (Maria), Edward Colmans (Scout Seguin), Don Kennedy (Bonham) Vicente Padula (General Cos)

Frank Lloyd (1886-1960)

The Gentleman from Indiana (1915)
Jane (1915)

The Reform Candidate (1915)
The Tongues of Men (1916)
The Call of the Cumberlands (1916)
Madame la Presidente (1916)
The Code of Marcia Gray (1916)
The Intrigue (1916)
David Garrick (1916)
The Making of Maddalena (1916)
An International Marriage (1916)
The Stronger Lover (1916)
Sins of Her Parent (1916)
The World and the Woman (1916)
The Price of Silence (1917)
A Tale of Two Cities (1917)
American Methods (1917)
When a Man Sees Red (1917)
Les Misérables (1917)
The Heart of a Lion (1917)
The Kingdom of Love (1917)
The Blindness of Divorce (1918)
True Blue (1918)
Riders of the Purple Sage (1918)
The Rainbow Trail (1918)
For Freedom (1918)
The Man Hunter (1919)
Pitfalls of a Big City (1919)
The World and Its Woman (1919)
The Loves of Letty (1919)
The Woman in Room 13 (1920)
The Silver Horde (1920)
Madame X (1920)
The Great Lover (1920)
A Tale of Two Worlds (1921)
Roads of Destiny (1921)
A Voice in the Dark (1921)

The Invisible Power (1921)
The Man from Lost River (1921)
The Grim Comedian (1921)
The Eternal Flame (1922)
The Sin Flood (1922)
Oliver Twist (1922)
The Voice from the Minaret (1923)
Within the Law (1923)
Asbes of Vengeance (1923)
Black Oxen (1923)
The Sea Hawk (1924)
The Silent Watcher (1924)
Her Husband's Secret (1925)
Winds of Chance (1925)
The Splendid Road (1925)
The Wise Guy (1926)
The Eagle of the Sea (1926)
Children of Divorce (1927)
Adoration (1928)
Weary River (1929)
The Divine Lady (1929)
Young Nowheres (1929)
Dark Streets (1929)
Drag (1929)
The Way of All Men (1930)
The Lash (1930)
The Right of Way (1931)
East Lynne (1931)
The Age for Love (1931)
A Passport to Hell (1932)
Cavalcade (1933)
Berkeley Square (1933)
Hoop-La (1933)
Servants' Entrance (1934)
Mutiny on the Bounty (1935)

Under Two Flags (1936)
Maid of Salem (1937)
Wells Fargo (1937)
If I Were King (1938)
Rulers of the Sea (1939)
The Howards of Virginia (1940)
This Woman Is Mine (1941)
The Lady from Cheyenne (1941)
Forever and a Day (1943)
Blood on the Sun (1945)
The Shanghai Story (1954)
The Last Command (1955)

***The Man with the Golden Arm* (1955)**

Director: Otto Preminger
Screenplay: Walter Newman, Lewis Meltzer, & Ben Hecht, from the 1949 novel of the same name by Nelson Algren
Cinematographer: Sam Leavitt
Editor: Louis R. Loeffler
Music: Elmer Bernstein
Production Designer: Joseph C. Wright
Costume Designer: Mary Ann Nyberg
Running time: 119 minutes
Format: 35mm, in black and white
Cast: Frank Sinatra (Frankie “Dealer” Machine), Eleanor Parker (Zosh), Kim Novak (Molly Novotny), Arnold Stang (Sparrow), Darren McGavin (“Nifty Louie” Fomorowski), Robert Strauss (Zero Schwiefka), John Conte (Drunkie John), Doro Merande (Vi), George E. Stone (Sam Markette), George Mathews (Williams), Leonid Kinskey (Dominowski), Emile Meyer (Captain Bednar), Shorty Rogers (As himself, bandleader at audition), Shelly Manne (As himself, drummer at audition), Harold “Tommy” Hart (Officer Kvorka), Frank Marlowe (Yantek), Jack Mulhall (Turnkey), Ralph Neff (Chester), Martha Wentowrth (Vangie), Will Wright (Harry Lane)

Otto Preminger (1905-86)

The Great Love (1931)
Under Your Spell (1936)
Danger-Love at Work (1937)
Kidnapped (1938)
Margin for Error (1943)
In the Meantime, Darling (1944)
Laura (1944)
A Royal Scandal (1945)
Fallen Angel (1945)
Centennial Summer (1946)
Forever Amber (1947)
Daisy Kenyon (1947)
The Fan (1949)
Whirlpool (1949)
Where the Sidewalk Ends (1950)
The 13th Letter (1951)
Angel Face (1953)
The Moon Is Blue (1953)
The Girl on the Roof (1953)
Carmen Jones (1954)
River of No Return (1954)
The Court-Martial of Billy Mitchell (1955)
The Man with the Golden Arm (1956)
Saint Joan (1957)
Bonjour Tristesse (1958)
Porgy and Bess (1959)
Anatomy of a Murder (1959)
Exodus (1960)
Advise & Consent (1962)
The Cardinal (1963)
In Harm's Way (1965)
Bunny Lake Is Missing (1965)
Hurry Sundown (1967)
Skidoo (1968)

Tell Me That You Love Me, Junie Moon (1970)

Such Good Friends (1971)

Rosebud (1975)

The Human Factor (1979)

***I'll Cry Tomorrow* (1955)**

Director: Daniel Mann

Screenplay: Helene Deutsch, Jay Richard Kennedy, Lillian Roth, Mike Connolly, Gerold Frank

Cinematographer: Arthur E. Arling

Editor: Harold F. Kress

Music: Alex North

Art Directors: Malcolm Brown, Cedric Gibbons

Costume Designer: Helen Rose

Running time: 117 minutes

Format: 35mm, in black and white

Cast: Susan Hayward (Lillian Roth), Richard Conte (Tony Bardeman), Eddie Albert (Burt McGuire), Jo Van Fleet (Katie Silverman Roth, Lillian's mother), Don Taylor (Wallie), Ray Danton (David Tredman), Margo (Selma), Virginia Gregg (Ellen), Don "Red" Barry (Jerry), David Kasday (David Tredman as a child), Carole Ann Campbell (Lillian Roth as a child), Gail Ganley (Lillian Roth, age 15), Peter Leeds (Richard Elstead), Tol Avery (Drunk party guest, Joe), Anthony Jochim (Paul, butler), Jack Daley (Cab driver), Ralph Edwards (Himself, as host of the TV program "This Is Your Life"), Robert Dix (Henry), Eve McVeagh (Ethel), Voltaire Perkins (Mr. Byrd, movie producer), Ruth Storey (Marge Belney)

Daniel Mann (1912-91)

Come Back, Little Sheba (1952)

About Mrs. Leslie (1954)

The Rose Tattoo (1955)

I'll Cry Tomorrow (1955)

The Teahouse of the August Moon (1956)

Hot Spell (1958)

The Last Angry Man (1959)
BUTterfield 8 (1960)
The Mountain Road (1960)
Ada (1961)
Who's Got the Action? (1962)
Five Finger Exercise (1962)
Who's Been Sleeping in My Bed? (1963)
Our Man Flint (1966)
Judith (1966)
For Love of Ivy (1968)
A Dream of Kings (1969)
Willard (1971)
The Revengers (1972)
Maurie (1973)
Interval (1973)
Lost in the Stars (1974)
Journey into Fear, a.k.a. *Burn Out* (1975)
Matilda (1978)

***The Gold Rush* (1925)**

Director: Charles Chaplin
Screenplay: Charles Chaplin
Cinematographer: Roland H. Totheroh
Editor: Charles Chaplin
Music: Charles Chaplin (the film was re-released in 1942 with a musical soundtrack by Max Terr and with Chaplin's narration)
Production Designer: Charles D. Hall
Running time: 82 minutes
Format: 35mm, in black and white; silent
Cast: Charles Chaplin (The Lone Prospector), Mack Swain (Big Jim McKay), Tom Murray (Black Larsen), Georgia Hale (Georgia), Malcolm Waite (Jack Cameron), Henry Bergman (Hank Curtis), Stanley Sanford (Barman), Barbara Pierce (Manicurist), "Daddy" Taylor (Ancient Dancing Prospector); Betty Morrissey, Kay Desleys, Joan Lowell

(Georgia's Friends); John Rand, Albert Austin, Heine Conklin, Allan Garcia, Tom Wood (Prospectors); A. J. O'Connor, Art Walker (Officers)

The Bottom of the Bottle (1956)

Director: Henry Hathaway

Screenplay: Sydney Boehm, from the 1949 novel of the same name by Georges Simenon

Cinematographer: Lee Garmes

Editor: David Bretherton

Music: Leigh Harline

Art Directors: Maurice Ransford, Lyle Wheeler

Costume Designer: William J. Travilla

Running time: 88 minutes

Format: 35mm, in color

Cast: Joseph Cotten (Pat "P.M." Martin), Van Johnson (Donald Martin/Eric Bell), Ruth Roman (Nora Martin), Jack Carson (Hal Breckinridge), Margaret Hayes (Lil Breckenridge), Bruce Bennett (Brand), Brad Dexter (Stanley Miller), Jim Davis (George Cady), Margaret Lindsay (Hannah Cady), Nancy Gates (Mildred Martin), Pedro Gonzalez-Gonzalez (Luis Romero), John Lee (Jenkins), Ernestine Barrier (Lucy Grant), Walter Woolf King (Grant), Sandy Descher (Annie Martin), Henry Morgan (Felix), Kim Charney (Frank Martin), Maria Valerani (Mrs. Romero), Jorge Treviño (Díaz), Joanne Jordan (Emily)

While the City Sleeps (1956)

Director: Fritz Lang

Screenplay: Casey Robinson, from the 1953 novel *The Bloody Spur*, by Charles Einstein

Cinematographer: Ernest Laszlo

Editor: Gene Fowler, Jr.

Music: Herschel Burke Gilbert

Art Director: Carroll Clark

Costume Designer: Norma Koch

Running time: 110 minutes

Format: 35mm, in black and white

Cast: Dana Andrews (Edward Mobley), Rhonda Fleming (Dorothy Kyne), George Sanders (Mark Loving), Howard Duff (Lt. Burt Kaufman), Thomas Mitchell (Jon Day Griffith), Vincent Price (Walter Kyne), Sally Forrest (Nancy Liggett), John Drew Barrymore (Robert Manners, Lipstick Killer), James Craig ("Honest" Harry Kritzer), Ida Lupino (Mildred Donner), Robert Warwick (Amos Kyne), Mae Marsh (Mrs. Manners), Ralph Peters (Gerald Meade), Sandy White (Judith Felton), Larry J. Blake (Tim, police desk sergeant), Celia Lovsky (Miss Dodd), Ed Hinton (Mike O'Leary), Pitt Herbert (Carlo), Vladimir Sokoloff (George "Pop" Pilski), Leonard Carey (Steven), Andrew Lupino (Jim Leary)

Fritz Lang (1890-1976)

Master of Love (1919)

The Half-Caste (1919)

Harakiri (1919)

Spiders (2 parts, 1919-20)

The Wandering Image (1920)

Destiny (1921)

Four Around the Woman (1921)

Dr. Mabuse: The Gambler (1922)

Die Nibelungen (1924, comprising *Siegfried & Kriemhild's Revenge*)

Metropolis (1926)

Spies (1928)

Woman in the Moon (1929)

M (1931)

The Testament of Dr. Mabuse, a.k.a. *The Last Will of Dr. Mabuse* (1933)

Liliom (1934)

Fury (1936)

You Only Live Once (1937)

You and Me (1938)

The Return of Frank James (1940)

Man Hunt (1941)

Western Union (1941)

Hangmen Also Die (1943)
Ministry of Fear (1944)
The Woman in the Window (1944)
Scarlet Street (1945)
Cloak and Dagger (1946)
Secret Beyond the Door (1947)
American Guerilla in the Philippines (1950)
House by the River (1950)
Clash by Night (1952)
Rancho Notorious (1952)
The Big Heat (1953)
The Blue Gardenia (1953)
Human Desire (1954)
Moonfleet (1955)
Beyond a Reasonable Doubt (1956)
While the City Sleeps (1956)
Tiger of Bengal (1959)
The Indian Tomb (1959)
The Thousand Eyes of Dr. Mabuse, a.k.a. *Diabolical Dr. Mabuse* (1960)

***The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1956)**

Director: Nunnally Johnson

Screenplay: Nunnally Johnson, from the 1955 novel of the same name by Sloan Wilson

Cinematographer: Charles G. Clarke

Editor: Dorothy Spencer

Music: Bernard Herrmann

Art Directors: Jack Martin Smith, Lyle Wheeler

Costume Designer: John Intlekofer

Running time: 153 minutes

Format: 35mm, in color

Cast: Gregory Peck (Tom Rath), Jennifer Jones (Betsy Rath), Fredric March (Ralph Hopkins), Marisa Pavan (Maria Montagne), Lee J. Cobb (Judge Bernstein), Ann Harding (Helen Hopkins), Keenan Wynn (Sgt. Caesar Gardella), Gene Lockhart (Bill Hawthorne), Gigi Perreau (Susan

Hopkins), Portland Mason (Janey Rath), Arthur O'Connell (Gordon Walker), Henry Daniell (Bill Ogden), Connie Gilchrist (Mrs. Manter), Joseph Sweeney (Edward M. Schultz), Sandy Descher (Barbara Rath), Mickey Maga (Pete Rath), Leon Alton (Cliff Otis), Alexander Campbell (Walter Johnson), Ruth Clifford (Florence), Roy Glenn (Sgt. Matthews), Phyllis Graffeo (Gina Gardella), Jerry Hall (Freddie), Michael Jeffers (Alfred J. Sims), Nan Martin (Polly Lawrence), Kenneth Tobey (Lt. Hank Mahoney), Geraldine Wall (Miriam)

Nunnally Johnson (1897-1977)

Night People (1954)

Black Widow (1954)

How to Be Very, Very Popular (1955)

The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit (1956)

Oh, Men! Oh, Women! (1957)

The Three Faces of Eve (1957)

The Man Who Understood Women (1959)

The Angel Wore Red (1960)

***Attack!* (1956)**

Director: Robert Aldrich

Screenplay: James Poe, from the 1954 play *Fragile Fox*, by Norman Brooks

Cinematographer: Joseph Biroc

Editor: Michael Luciano

Music: Frank Devol

Art Director: William Glasgow

Running time: 107 minutes

Format: 35mm, in black and white

Cast: Jack Palance (Lt. Joe Costa), Eddie Albert (Capt. Erskine Cooney), Lee Marvin (Lt. Col. Clyde Bartlett), William Smithers (Lt. Harold "Harry" Woodruff), Robert Strauss (Pfc. Bernstein), Richard Jaeckel (Pvt. Snowden), Buddy Ebsen (T/Sgt. Tolliver), Jon Shepodd (Cpl. John Jackson), Peter van Eyck (SS Captain), James Goodwin (Pfc. Ricks), Steven Geray (Otto, German NCO), Judson Taylor (Pvt. Jacob

R. Abramowitz), Strother Martin (Sgt. Ingersol), Louis Mercier (Brouise), Ron McNeil (Pfc. Jones)

Robert Aldrich (1918-83)

Big Leaguer (1953)

World for Ransom (1954)

Apache (1954)

Vera Cruz (1954)

Kiss Me Deadly (1955)

The Big Knife (1955)

Autumn Leaves (1956)

Attack! (1956)

The Garment Jungle (1957)

Ten Seconds to Hell (1959)

The Angry Hills (1959)

The Last Sunset (1961)

Sodom and Gomorrah (1962)

What Ever Happened to Baby Jane? (1962)

4 for Texas (1963)

Hush ... Hush, Sweet Charlotte (1964)

The Flight of the Phoenix (1965)

The Dirty Dozen (1967)

The Legend of Lylah Clare (1968)

The Killing of Sister George (1968)

Too Late the Hero (1970)

The Grissom Gang (1971)

Ulzana's Raid (1972)

Emperor of the North (1973)

The Longest Yard (1974)

Hustle (1975)

Twilight's Last Gleaming (1977)

The Choirboys (1977)

The Frisco Kid (1979)

... All the Marbles (1981)

***Moby Dick* (1956)**

Director: John Huston

Screenplay: Ray Bradbury & John Huston, from the 1851 novel of the same name by Herman Melville

Cinematographer: Oswald Morris

Editor: Russell Lloyd

Music: Philip Sainton

Production Designers: Geoffrey Drake, Stephen Drake

Costume Designer: Elizabeth Haffenden

Running time: 116 minutes

Format: 35mm, in color

Cast: Gregory Peck (Capt. Ahab), Richard Basehart (Ishmael), Leo Genn (Starbuck), James Robertson Justice (Captain Boomer), Harry Andrews (Stubb), Bernard Miles (Manxman), Noel Purcell (Ship's Carpenter), Edric Connor (Daggoo), Mervyn Johns (Peleg), Joseph Tomelty (Peter Coffin), Francis de Wolff (Capt. Gardiner), Philip Stainton (Bildad), Royal Dano (Elijah), Seamus Kelly (Flask), Friedrich Ledebur (Queequeg), Orson Welles (Father Mapple), Tamba Allenby (Pip), Tom Clegg (Tashtego), Ted Howard (Perth), Iris Tree (Bible woman), John Huston (Voice of Peter Coffin and *Pequod* lookout)

John Huston (1906-87)

The Maltese Falcon (1941)

In This Our Life (1942)

Across the Pacific (1942)

The Treasure of the Sierra Madre (1948)

Key Largo (1948)

We Were Strangers (1949)

The Asphalt Jungle (1950)

The Red Badge of Courage (1951)

The African Queen (1951)

Moulin Rouge (1952)

Beat the Devil (1953)

Moby Dick (1956)

Heaven Knows, Mr. Allison (1957)

The Barbarian and the Geisha (1958)
The Roots of Heaven (1958)
The Unforgiven (1960)
The Misfits (1961)
Freud (1962)
The List of Adrian Messenger (1963)
The Night of the Iguana (1964)
The Bible (1966)
Reflections in a Golden Eye (1967)
Sinful Davey (1969)
A Walk with Love and Death (1969)
The Kremlin Letter (1970)
Fat City (1972)
The Life and Times of Judge Roy Bean (1972)
The Mackintosh Man (1973)
The Man Who Would Be King (1975)
Wise Blood (1979)
Phobia (1980)
Escape to Victory (1981)
Annie (1982)
Under the Volcano (1984)
Prizzi's Honor (1985)
The Dead (1987)

***The Solid Gold Cadillac* (1956)**

Director: Richard Quine

Screenplay: Abe Burrows, from the 1953 play of the same name by
George S. Kaufman & Howard Teichmann

Cinematographer: Charles Lang

Editor: Charles Nelson

Music: Cyril J. Mockridge, George Dunning

Art Director: Ross Bellah

Costume Designer: Jean Louis

Running time: 99 minutes

Format: 35mm, in black and white

Cast: Judy Holliday (Laura Partridge), Paul Douglas (Edward L. McKeever), Fred Clark (Clifford Snell), John Williams (John T. "Jack" Blessington), Hiram Sherman (Harry Harkness), Neva Patterson (Amelia Shotgraven), Ralph Dumke (Warren Gillie), Ray Collins (Alfred Metcalfe), Arthur O'Connell (Mark Jenkins), Harry Antrim (Senator Simpkins), Owen Coll (Bill Moran), Richard Deacon (Williams), Emily Getchell (Mrs. Ryan), Marilyn Hanold (Miss L'Arriere), Larry Hudson (George), Jack Latham (Bill Parker), George Burns (Narrator)

Richard Quine (1920-89)

Sunny Side of the Street (1951)

Purple Heart Diary (1951)

Sound Off (1952)

Castle in the Air (1952)

All Ashore (1953)

Cruisin' Down the River (1953)

Siren of Baghdad (1953)

Drive a Crooked Road (1954)

Pushover (1954)

So This Is Paris (1954)

My Sister Eileen (1955)

The Solid Gold Cadillac (1956)

Full of Life (1956)

Operation Mad Ball (1957)

Bell, Book, and Candle (1958)

It Happened to Jane (1959)

Strangers When We Meet (1960)

The World of Suzie Wong (1960)

The Notorious Landlady (1962)

Paris When It Sizzles (1964)

Sex and the Single Girl (1964)

How to Murder Your Wife (1965)

Synanon, a.k.a. *Get Off My Back* (1965)

Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mamma's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feelin' So Sad (1967)

A Talent for Loving (1969)

The Moonshine War (1970)

W, a.k.a. *I Want Her Dead* (1974)

The Prisoner of Zenda (1979)

***Bigger than Life* (1956)**

Director: Nicholas Ray

Screenplay: Cyril Hume & Richard Maibaum, based on an article by Berton Roueché titled "Ten Feet Tall," from the *New Yorker* magazine of Sept. 10, 1955

Cinematographer: Joseph MacDonald

Editor: Louis R. Loeffler

Music: David Raksin

Art Directors: Jack Martin Smith, Lyle Wheeler

Costume Designer: Mary Wills

Running time: 95 minutes

Format: 35mm, in color

Cast: James Mason (Ed Avery), Barbara Rush (Lou Avery), Walter Matthau (Wally Gibbs), Robert F. Simon (Dr. Norton), Christopher Olsen (Richie Avery), Roland Winters (Dr. Ruric), Rusty Lane (Bob LaPorte), Rachel Stephens (Nurse), Kipp Hamilton (Pat Wade), Dee Aaker (Joe), Virginia Carroll (Mrs. Jones), Betty Caulfield (Mrs. LaPorte), Lewis Charles (Dr. MacLennan), Richard Collier (Andy). Bill Jones (Mr. Byron), Portland Mason (Nancy), Natalie Masters (Mrs. Tyndal), Jerry Mathers (Freddie), Mary McAdoo (Mrs. Edwards), Renny McEvoy (Mr. Jones), Joseph Mell (Frank), John Monaghan (Sam)

***Giant* (1956)**

Director: George Stevens

Screenplay: Fred Guiol & Ivan Moffat, from the 1952 novel of the same name by Edna Ferber

Cinematographer: William C. Mellor

Editors: William Hornbeck, Robert Lawrence

Music: Dmitri Tiomkin

Production Designer: Boris Leven

Costume Designer: Marjorie Best

Running time: 201 minutes

Format: 35mm, in color

Cast: Elizabeth Taylor (Leslie Benedict), Rock Hudson (Jordan Benedict, Jr.), James Dean (Jett Rink), Carroll Baker (Luz Benedict II), Jane Withers (Vashti Snythe), Chill Wills (Uncle Bawley), Mercedes McCambridge (Luz Benedict), Dennis Hopper (Jordan Benedict III), Sal Mineo (Angel Obregón II), Rod Taylor (Sir David Karfrey), Judith Evelyn (Mrs. Nancy Lynnton), Earl Holliman (Bob Dace), Robert Nichols (Mort "Pinky" Snythe), Paul Fix (Dr. Horace Lynnton), Alexander Scourby (Old Polo), Fran Bennett (Judy Benedict), Charles Watts (Judge Oliver Whiteside), Elsa Cárdenas (Juana Guerra Benedict), Carolyn Craig (Lacey Lynnton), Monte Hale (Bale Clinch), Sheb Wooley (Gabe Target), Mary Ann Edwards (Adarene Clinch), Victor Millan (Angel Obregón, Sr.), Mickey Simpson (Sarge), Pilar Del Rey (Mrs. Obregón), Maurice Jara (Dr. Guerra), Noreen Nash (Lona Lane), Ray Whitley (Watts), Napoleon Whiting (Jefferson Swazey)

George Stevens (1904-75)

Bachelor Bait (1934)

Kentucky Kernels (1934)

Laddie (1935)

The Nitwits (1935)

Alice Adams (1935)

Annie Oakley (1935)

Swing Time (1936)

Quality Street (1937)

A Damsel in Distress (1937)

Vivacious Lady (1938)

Gunga Din (1939)

Vigil in the Night (1940)

Penny Serenade (1941)

Woman of the Year (1942)
The Talk of the Town (1942)
The More the Merrier (1943)
I Remember Mama (1948)
A Place in the Sun (1951)
Something to Live For (1952)
Shane (1953)
Giant (1956)
The Diary of Anne Frank (1959)
The Greatest Story Ever Told (1965)
The Only Game in Town (1970)

***The Last Hunt* (1956)**

Director: Richard Brooks
Screenplay: Richard Brooks, from the 1954 novel of the same name by Milton Lott
Cinematographer: Russell Harlan
Editor: Ben Lewis
Music: Daniele Amfitheatrof
Art Directors: Cedric Gibbons, Merrill Pye
Costume Designer:
Running time: 108 minutes
Format: 35mm, in color
Cast: Robert Taylor (Charlie Gilson), Stewart Granger (Sandy McKenzie), Lloyd Nolan (Woodfoot), Debra Paget (Indian Girl), Russ Tamblyn (Jimmy O'Brien), Constance Ford (Peg), Joe De Santis (Ed Black), Ed Lonehill (Spotted Hand), Roy Bancroft (Maj. Smith), Ainslie Pryor (Buffalo Hunter #1), Dale Van Sickel (Buffalo Hunter #2)

***Seven Men from Now* (1956)**

Director: Budd Boetticher
Screenplay: Burt Kennedy
Cinematographer: William H. Clothier
Editor: Everett Sutherland
Music: Henry Vars

Art Director: Leslie Thomas

Running time: 78 minutes

Format: 35mm, in color

Cast: Randolph Scott (Ben Stride), Gail Russell (Annie Greer), Lee Marvin (Bill Masters), Walter Reed (John Greer), John Larch (Payte Bodeen), Donald "Red" Barry (Clete), Fred Graham & Cliff Lyons (Henchmen), John Berardino (Clint), John Phillips (Jed), Chuck Roberson (Mason), Stuart Whitman (Cavalry Lt. Collins), Pamela Duncan (Señorita Nellie), Steve Mitchell (Fowler), Fred Sherman (Prospector)

Budd Boetticher (1916-2001)

One Mysterious Night (1944)

The Missing Juror (1944)

Youth on Trial (1945)

A Guy, a Gal, and a Pal (1945)

Escape in the Fog (1945)

Assigned to Danger (1948)

Behind Locked Doors (1948)

Black Midnight (1949)

The Wolf Hunters (1949)

Killer Shark (1950)

Bullfighter and the Lady (1951)

The Cimarron Kid (1952)

Bronco Buster (1952)

Red Ball Express (1952)

Horizons West (1952)

City Beneath the Sea (1953)

Seminole (1953)

The Man from the Alamo (1953)

Wings of the Hawk (1953)

East of Sumatra (1953)

The Magnificent Matador (1955)

Seven Men from Now (1956)

The Killer Is Loose (1956)

Decision at Sundown (1957)
Buchanan Rides Alone (1958)
Ride Lonesome (1959)
Westbound (1959)
Comanche Station (1960)
The Rise and Fall of Legs Diamond (1960)
A Time for Dying (1969)

***A King in New York* (1957)**

Director: Charles Chaplin
Screenplay: Charles Chaplin
Cinematographer: Georges Périnal
Editor: John Seabourne
Music: Charles Chaplin
Art Director: Allan Harris
Costume Designer: J. Wilson-Apperson
Running time: 105 minutes
Format: 35mm, in black and white
Cast: Charles Chaplin (King Shahdov), Maxine Audley (Queen Irene),
Jerry Desmonde (Prime Minister Voudel), Oliver Johnston
(Ambassador Jaume), Dawn Addams (Ann Kay), Sidney James
(Johnson), Joan Ingram (Mona Cromwell), Michael Chaplin (Rupert
Macabee), John McLaren (Macabee Senior), Phil Brown (Headmaster),
Harry Green (Lawyer), Robert Arden (Liftboy), Alan Gifford (School
Superintendent), Robert Cawdron (U.S. Marshal), Hugh McDermott
(Bill Johnson); George Woodbridge, Clifford Buckton, & Vincent
Lawson (Members of Atomic Commission)

***The Bachelor Party* (1957)**

Director: Delbert Mann
Screenplay: Paddy Chayefsky, from his 1953 teleplay of the same name
Cinematographer: Joseph LaShelle
Music: Paul Madeira, Alex North
Art Director: Ted Haworth
Costume Designer: Mary Grant

Running time: 92 minutes

Format: 35mm, in black and white

Cast: Don Murray (Charlie Samson), E. G. Marshall (Walter), Jack Warden (Eddie Watkins, the Bachelor), Philip Abbott (Arnold Craig), Larry Blyden (Kenneth), Patricia Smith (Helen Samson), Carolyn Jones (The Existentialist), Nancy Marchand (Mrs. Julie Samson)

Delbert Mann (1920-2007)

Marty (1955)

The Bachelor Party (1957)

Desire Under the Elms (1958)

Separate Tables (1958)

Middle of the Night (1959)

The Dark at the Top of the Stairs (1960)

Lover Come Back (1961)

The Outsider (1961)

That Touch of Mink (1962)

A Gathering of Eagles (1963)

Dear Heart (1964)

Quick, Before It Melts (1964)

Mister Buddwing (1966)

Fitzwilly (1967)

The Pink Jungle (1968)

Kidnapped (1971)

Birch Interval (1976)

Night Crossing (1982)

Brontë (1983)

***Twelve Angry Men* (1957)**

Director: Sidney Lumet

Screenplay: Reginald Rose, from his 1954 teleplay of the same name

Cinematographer: Boris Kaufman

Editor: Carl Lerner

Music: Kenyon Hopkins

Art Director: Robert Markell

Running time: 96 minutes

Format: 35mm, in black and white

Cast: Martin Balsam (Juror 1), John Fiedler (Juror 2), Lee J. Cobb (Juror 3), E. G. Marshall (Juror 4), Jack Klugman (Juror 5), Edward Binns (Juror 6), Jack Warden (Juror 7), Henry Fonda (Juror 8), Joseph Sweeney (Juror 9), Ed Begley (Juror 10), George Voskovec (Juror 11), Robert Webber (Juror 12)

Sidney Lumet (1924-2011)

Twelve Angry Men (1957)

Stage Struck (1958)

That Kind of Woman (1959)

The Fugitive Kind (1960)

A View from the Bridge (1962)

Long Day's Journey into Night (1962)

Fail-Safe (1964)

Pawnbroker (1965)

The Hill (1965)

The Group (1966)

The Deadly Affair (1967)

Bye Bye Braverman (1968)

The Sea Gull (1968)

The Appointment (1970)

The Last of the Mobile Hot Shots (1970)

The Anderson Tapes (1971)

Child's Play (1972)

The Offence (1973)

Serpico (1973)

Lovin' Molly (1974)

Murder on the Orient Express (1974)

Dog Day Afternoon (1975)

Equus (1977)

Network (1977)

The Wiz (1978)

Just Tell Me What You Want (1980)

Prince of the City (1981)
Deathtrap (1982)
The Verdict (1982)
Daniel (1983)
Garbo Talks (1984)
Power (1986)
The Morning After (1986)
Running on Empty (1988)
Family Business (1989)
Q & A (1990)
A Stranger Among Us (1992)
Guilty as Sin (1993)
Night Falls on Manhattan (1997)
Critical Care (1997)
Gloria (1999)
Find Me Guilty (2006)
Before the Devil Knows You're Dead (2007)

***Bitter Victory* (1957)**

Director: Nicholas Ray

Screenplay: Nicholas Ray, René Hardy, Gavin Lambert, & Paul Gallico,
from Hardy's 1956 French novel titled *Amère victoire*

Cinematographer: Michel Kelber

Editor: Léonide Azar

Music: Maurice Le Roux

Production Designer: Jean d'Eaubonne

Costume Designer: Jean Zay

Running time: 82 minutes

Format: 35mm, in black and white

Cast: Richard Burton (Capt. Jim Leith), Curd Jürgens (Maj. David Brand), Ruth Roman (Jane Brand), Raymond Pellegrin (Mekrane), Anthony Bushell (Gen. Patterson), Alfred Burke (Lt. Col. Callander), Sean Kelly (Lt. Barton), Ramón de Larrocha (Lt. Sanders), Christopher Lee (Sgt. Barney), Ronan O'Casey (Sgt. Dunnigan), Fred Matter (Col. Lutze), Raoul Delfosse (Lt. Kassel), Andrew Crawford (Pvt. Roberts),

Nigel Green (Lance Cpl. Wilkins), Harry Landis (Pvt. Browning),
Christian Melsen (Pvt. Abbot), Sumner Williams (Pvt. Anderson), Joe
Davray (Pvt. Spicer)

***The Killing* (1956)**

Director: Stanley Kubrick

Screenplay: Stanley Kubrick & Jim Thompson, from the 1955 novel
Clean Break, by Lionel White

Cinematographer: Lucien Ballard

Editor: Betty Steinberg

Music: Gerald Fried

Art Director: Ruth Sobotka

Costume Designer: Jack Masters

Running time: 85 minutes

Format: 35mm, in black and white

Cast: Sterling Hayden (Johnny Clay), Coleen Gray (Fay), Vince Edwards
(Val Cannon), Jay C. Flippen (Marvin Unger), Elisha Cook, Jr. (George
Peatty), Marie Windsor (Sherry Peatty), Ted de Corsia (Policeman
Randy Kennan), Joe Sawyer (Mike O'Reilly), James Edwards (Track
parking attendant), Timothy Carey (Nikki Arane), Joe Turkel (Tiny),
Jay Adler (Leo the Loanshark), Tito Vuolo (Joe Piano), Kola Kwariani
(Maurice Oboukhoff), Dorothy Adams (Mrs. Ruthie O'Reilly), James
Griffith (Mr. Grimes), Steve Mitchell (Brown), Richard Reeves (Bill),
Art Gilmore (Narrator)

Stanley Kubrick (1928-99)

Fear and Desire (1953)

Killer's Kiss (1955)

Paths of Glory (1957)

Spartacus (1960)

Lolita (1962)

Dr. Strangelove (1964)

2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)

A Clockwork Orange (1971)

Barry Lyndon (1975)

The Shining (1980)
Full Metal Jacket (1987)
Eyes Wide Shut (1999)

***Peyton Place* (1957)**

Director: Mark Robson
Screenplay: John Michael Hayes, from the 1956 novel of the same name
by Grace Metalious
Cinematographer: William Mellor
Editors: David Bretherton, James B. Clark
Music: Franz Waxman
Art Directors: Jack Martin Smith, Lyle Wheeler
Costume Designer: Adele Palmer
Running time: 157 minutes
Format: 35mm, in color
Cast: Lana Turner (Constance MacKenzie), Diane Varsi (Allison MacKenzie), Hope Lange (Selena Cross), Lee Philips (Michael Rossi), Arthur Kennedy (Lucas Cross), Lloyd Nolan (Dr. Matthew Swain), Russ Tamblyn (Norman Page), Terry Moore (Betty Anderson), David Nelson (Ted Carter), Barry Coe (Rodney Harrington), Betty Field (Nellie Cross), Mildred Dunnock (Miss Elsie Thornton), Leon Ames (Leslie Harrington), Lorne Greene (District Attorney), Robert H. Harris (Seth Bushwell), Staats Cotsworth (Charles Partridge), Peg Hillias (Marion Partridge), Tami Conner (Margie), Erin O'Brien Moore (Mrs. Evelyn Page), Scotty Morrow (Joey Cross), Edith Clair (Miss Colton), Edwin Jerome (Cory Hyde), Kip King (Pee Wee), William Lundmark (Paul Cross), Scotty Morrow (Joseph "Joey" Cross), Alan Reed, Jr. (Matt), Steffi Sidney (Kathy)

Mark Robson (1913-78)

The Seventh Victim (1943)
The Ghost Ship (1943)
Youth Runs Wild (1944)
Isle of the Dead (1945)
Bedlam (1946)

Champion (1949)
Roughshod (1949)
Home of the Brave (1949)
My Foolish Heart (1949)
Edge of Doom (1950)
Bright Victory (1951)
I Want You (1951)
Return to Paradise (1953)
Hell Below Zero (1954)
Phffft! (1954)
The Bridges at Toko-Ri (1954)
A Prize of Gold (1955)
Trial (1955)
The Harder They Fall (1956)
The Little Hut (1957)
Peyton Place (1957)
The Inn of the Sixth Happiness (1958)
From the Terrace (1960)
Nine Hours to Rama (1963)
The Prize (1963)
Von Ryan's Express (1965)
Lost Command (1966)
Valley of the Dolls (1967)
Daddy's Gone A-Hunting (1969)
Happy Birthday, Wanda June (1971)
Limbo (1972)
Earthquake (1974)
Avalanche Express (1979)

***A Farewell to Arms* (1957)**

Director: Charles Vidor

Screenplay: Ben Hecht, from the 1929 novel of the same name by Ernest Hemingway and its 1930 dramatic adaptation by Laurence Stallings

Cinematographers: Oswald Morris, Piero Portalupi

Editors: John M. Foley, Gerard J. Wilson

Music: Mario Nascimbene

Production Designer: Alfred Junge

Costume Designers: Veniero Colasanti, John Moore

Running time: 141 minutes

Format: 35mm, in color

Cast: Rock Hudson (Lt. Frederick Henry), Jennifer Jones (Catherine Barkley), Vittorio De Sica (Maj. Alessandro Rinaldi), Oskar Homolka (Dr. Emerich), Mercedes McCambridge (Miss Van Campen), Elaine Stritch (Helen Ferguson), Kurt Kasznar (Bonello), Victor Francen (Col. Valentini), Franco Interlenghi (Aymo), Leopoldo Trieste (Passini), José Nieto (Maj. Stampi), Georges Bréhat (Capt. Bassi), Johanna Hofer (Mrs. Zimmerman), Eduard Linkers (Lt. Zimmerman), Eva Kotthaus (Delivery room nurse), Alberto Sordi (Father Galli), Memmo Carotenuto (Nino the doorkeeper)

Charles Vidor (1900-59)

Sensation Hunters (1933)

Double Door (1934)

Strangers All (1935)

The Arizonian (1935)

His Family Tree (1935)

Muss 'em Up (1936)

Sinister House (1936)

A Doctor's Diary (1937)

The Great Gambini (1937)

She's No Lady (1937)

Romance of the Redwoods (1939)

Blind Alley (1939)

Those High Grey Walls (1939)

My Son, My Son! (1940)

The Lady in Question (1940)

Ladies in Retirement (1941)

New York Town (1941)

The Tuttles of Tahiti (1942)

The Desperadoes (1943)

Cover Girl (1944)
Together Again (1944)
A Song to Remember (1945)
Over 21 (1945)
Gilda (1946)
The Loves of Carmen (1948)
Thunder in the East (1951)
Hans Christian Andersen (1952)
Rhapsody (1954)
Love Me or Leave Me (1955)
The Swan (1956)
The Joker Is Wild (1957)
A Farewell to Arms (1957)
Song Without End (1960)

***Touch of Evil* (1958)**

Director: Orson Welles

Screenplay: Orson Welles, from the 1956 novel *Badge of Evil*, by Whit Masterson

Cinematographer: Russell Metty

Editors: Aaron Stell, Virgil Vogel, Edward Curtiss; Walter Murch (1998 restoration)

Music: Henry Mancini

Art Directors: Robert Clatworthy, Alexander Golitzen

Costume Designer: Bill Thomas

Running time: 95 minutes (111 min., 1998 restoration)

Format: 35mm, in black and white

Cast: Charlton Heston (Ramon Miguel Vargas), Janet Leigh (Susan Vargas), Orson Welles (Police captain Hank Quinlan), Joseph Calleia (Police sergeant Pete Menzies), Akim Tamiroff (Uncle Joe Grandi), Joanna Cook Moore (Marcia Linnekar), Ray Collins (District attorney Adair), Dennis Weaver (Mirador Motel night manager), Valentin de Vargas (Pancho), Mort Mills (Al Schwartz), Victor Millan (Manelo Sanchez), Lalo Rios (Risto), Phil Harvey (Blaine), Joi Lansing (Zita), Harry Shannon (Police chief Pete Gould), Rusty Wescoatt (Detective

Casey), Arlene McQuade (Ginnie), Marlene Dietrich (Tana), Gus Schilling (Eddie Farnham), Eleanor Dorado (Lia), Jennie Dias (Jackie), Domenick Delgarde (Lackey), Yolanda Bojorquez (Bobbie), Joseph Cotten (Coroner), William Tannen (Howard Frantz); Wayne Taylor, Ken Miller, Raymond Rodriguez (Gang members)

***The Sheepman* (1958)**

Director: George Marshall

Screenplay: William Bowers, James Edward Grant, William Roberts

Cinematographer: Robert J. Bronner

Editor: Ralph E. Winters

Music: Jeff Alexander

Art Directors: Malcolm Brown, William A. Horning

Costume Designer: Walter Plunkett

Running time: 85 minutes

Format: 35mm, in color

Cast: Glenn Ford (Jason Sweet), Shirley MacLaine (Dell Payton), Leslie Nielsen ("Colonel" Stephen Bedford/Johnny Bledsoe), Mickey Shaughnessy ("Jumbo" McCall), Edgar Buchanan (Milt Masters), Willis Bouchee (Frank Payton), Pernell Roberts (Chocktaw Neal), Slim Pickens (Marshal), Robert "Buzz" Henry (Red), Pedro Gonzalez-Gonzalez (Angelo), Irene Barton (Mme. Fifi), Brandy Bryan (Miss Rafferty), Lorraine Carol (Amy Masterson), G. Pat Collins (Elmer), Lee Tung Foo (Willie), Wes Hudman (Curly), Forrest Lewis (Mr. Baker), Frank Marlowe (Barney), Peggy Taylor (Laura Witkum)

George Marshall (1891-1975)

Pack Up Your Troubles (1932)

Their First Mistake (1932)

Towed in a Hole (1932)

365 Nights in Hollywood (1934)

Life Begins at 40 (1935)

In Old Kentucky (1935)

Show Them No Mercy! (1935)

A Message to Garcia (1936)

Love Under Fire (1937)
Can This Be Dixie? (1937)
Nancy Steele Is Missing! (1937)
The Goldwyn Follies (1938)
You Can't Cheat an Honest Man (1939)
Destry Rides Again (1939)
The Ghost Breakers (1940)
When the Daltons Rode (1940)
Pot o' Gold (1941)
Texas (1941)
Star Spangled Rhythm (1942)
The Forest Rangers (1942)
Murder, He Says (1945)
Hold That Blonde (1945)
The Blue Dahlia (1946)
Monsieur Beaucaire (1946)
The Perils of Pauline (1947)
Variety Girl (1947)
Tap Roots (1948)
My Friend Irma (1949)
Never a Dull Moment (1950)
Fancy Pants (1950)
The Savage (1952)
Money from Home (1953)
Scared Stiff (1953)
Houdini (1953)
Red Garters (1954)
Destry (1954)
The Guns of Fort Petticoat (1957)
The Sheepman (1958)
Imitation General (1958)
The Mating Game (1959)
It Started with a Kiss (1959)
The Gazebo (1959)
Cry for Happy (1961)

The Happy Thieves (1961)
Advance to the Rear (1964)
Boy, Did I Get a Wrong Number! (1966)
Eight on the Lam (1967)
Hook, Line & Sinker (1969)

***Perri* (1957)**

Directors: Paul Kenworthy & Ralph Wright
Screenplay: Ralph Wright & Winston Hibler, from the 1938 German novel of the same name by Felix Salten
Cinematographers: Joel Colman, Roy Edward Disney, Warren Garst, John P. Hermann, Paul Kenworthy, David Meyer, Walter Perkins, William Ratcliffe, James R. Simon
Editor: Jack Atwood
Music: Paul J. Smith
Special Effects: Ub Iwerks, Joshua Meador, Peter Ellenshaw
Running time: 75 minutes
Format: 35mm, in color
Cast: Winston Hibler (Narrator)

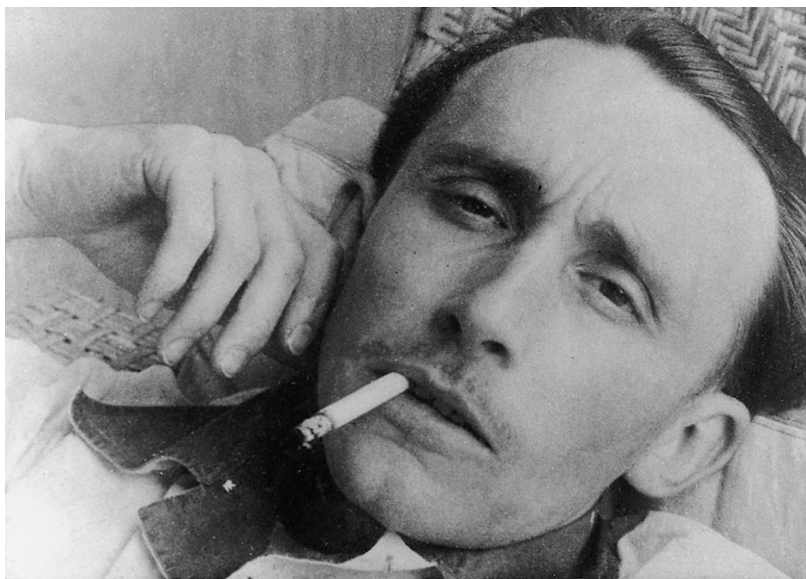
Paul Kenworthy (1925-2010)

Perri (1957)

Ralph Wright (1908-83)

Perri (1957)

Illustrations



André Bazin



The Human Comedy (1943), Clarence Brown



The Great Dictator (1940), Charles Chaplin



The Magnificent Ambersons (1942), Orson Welles



The Lost Weekend (1945), Billy Wilder



The Best Years of Our Lives (1946), William Wyler



Crossfire (1947), Edward Dmytryk



It's a Wonderful Life (1946), Frank Capra



Fourteen Hours (1951), Henry Hathaway



A Streetcar Named Desire (1951), Elia Kazan



Detective Story (1951), William Wyler



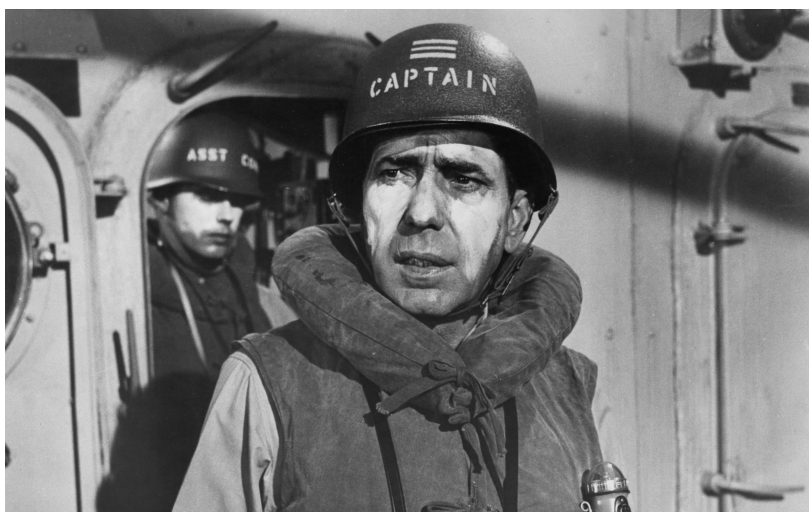
Above: *Diplomatic Courier* (1952), Henry Hathaway

Below: *Monkey Business* (1952), Howard Hawks





Stalag 17 (1953), Billy Wilder



The Caine Mutiny (1954), Edward Dmytryk



The High and the Mighty (1954), William Wellman



On the Waterfront (1954), Elia Kazan



Broken Lance (1954), Edward Dmytryk



Conquest of Space (1955), Byron Haskin



The Racers (1955), Henry Hathaway



Bad Day at Black Rock (1954), John Sturges



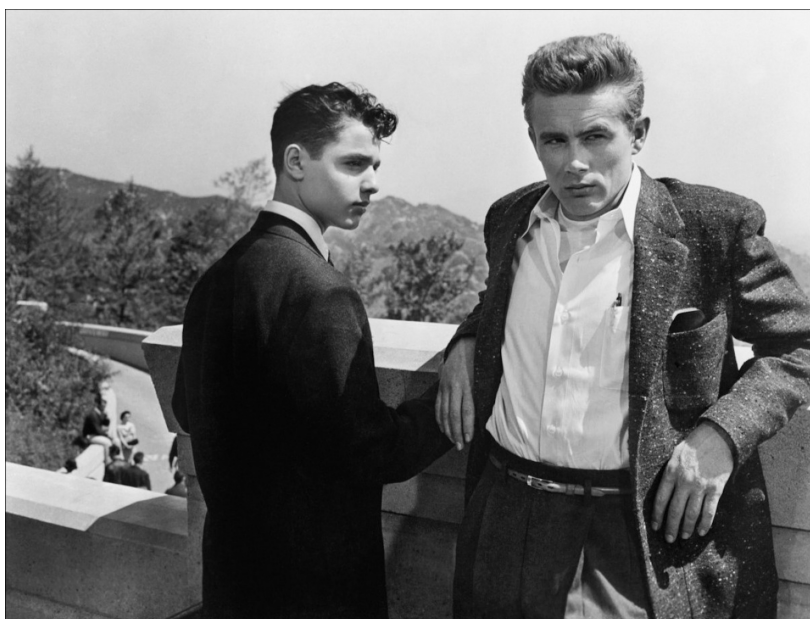
East of Eden (1955), Elia Kazan



Hallelujah (1929), King Vidor



Blackboard Jungle (1955), Richard Brooks



Rebel Without a Cause (1955), Nicholas Ray



Above: *The Last Command* (1955), Frank Lloyd

Below: *The Man with the Golden Arm* (1955), Otto Preminger





I'll Cry Tomorrow (1955), Daniel Mann



The Gold Rush (1925), Charles Chaplin



The Bottom of the Bottle (1956), Henry Hathaway



While the City Sleeps (1956), Fritz Lang



The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit (1956), Nunnally Johnson



Attack! (1956), Robert Aldrich



Moby Dick (1956), John Huston



The Solid Gold Cadillac (1956), Richard Quine



Bigger than Life (1956), Nicholas Ray



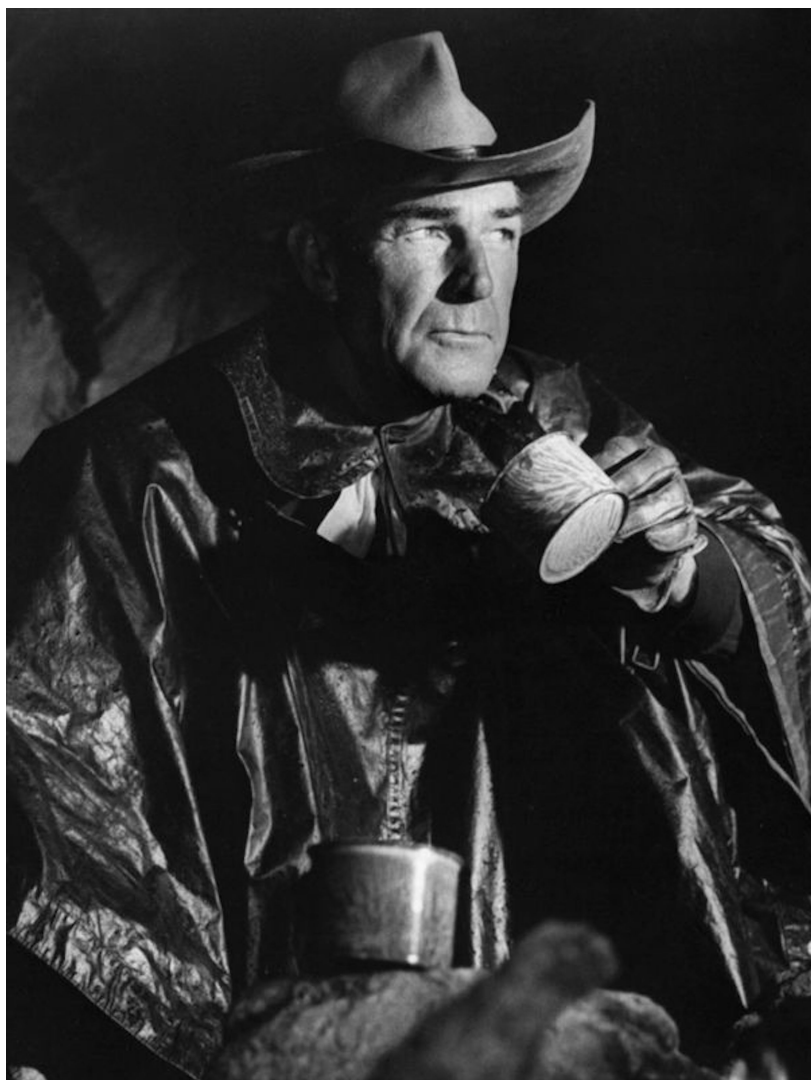
Giant (1956), George Stevens



The Last Hunt (1956), Richard Brooks



The Westerner (1940), William Wyler



Seven Men from Now (1957), Budd Boetticher



A King in New York (1957), Charles Chaplin



The Bachelor Party (1957), Delbert Mann



Twelve Angry Men (1957), Sidney Lumet



Bitter Victory (1957), Nicholas Ray



The Killing (1956), Stanley Kubrick



Peyton Place (1957), Mark Robson



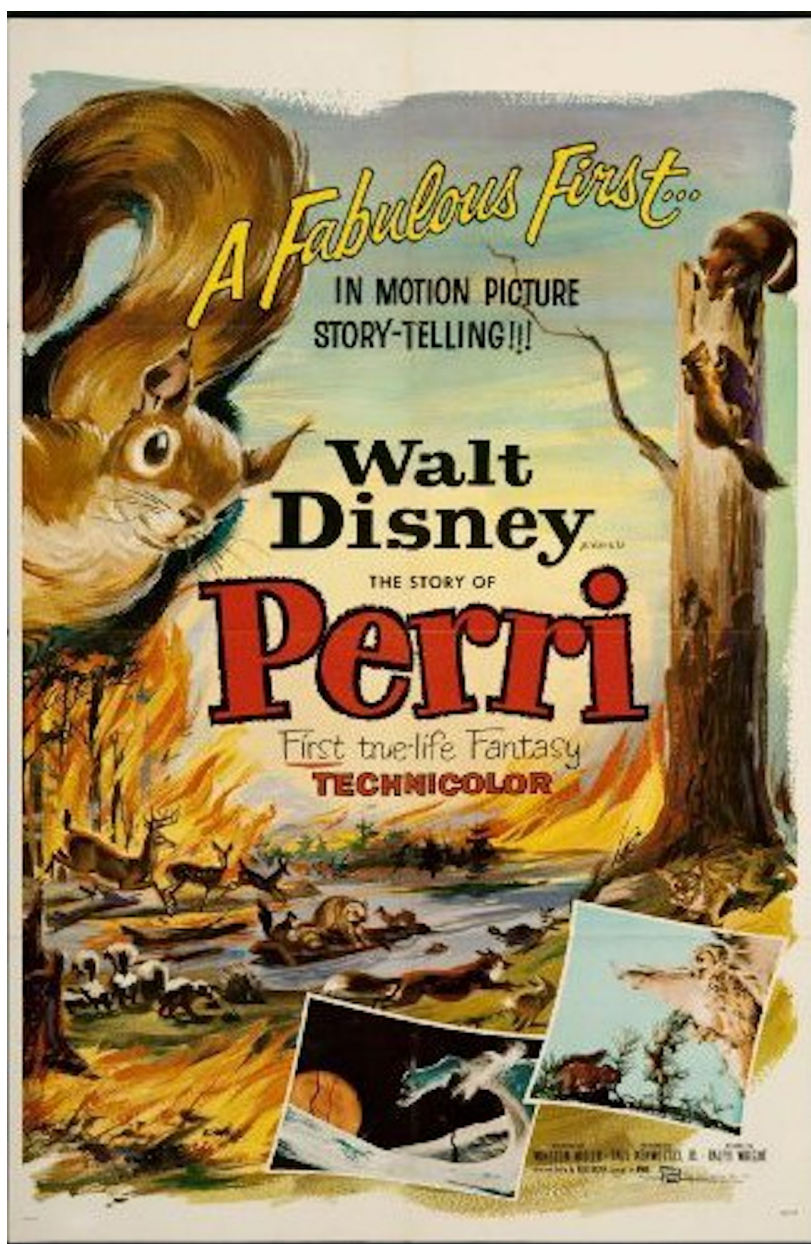
A Farewell to Arms (1957), Charles Vidor



Touch of Evil (1958), Orson Welles



The Sheepman (1958), George Marshall



Perri (1957), Paul Kenworthy & Ralph Wright

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Index

- Academy Awards: see "Oscars"
- Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (Hollywood), 38
- The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad*, 193
- The African Queen*, 61
- Age of Reason, 168
- Alain (Émile Chartier), 142
- Alberghetti, Anna Maria, 105
- Alcohol and Its Victims*, 38
- Alcoholics Anonymous, 108
- Alcoholism Leads to Tuberculosis*, 38
- Aldrich, Robert, 5-6, 100, 118, 127, 130-134, 154, 166, 171, 242, 278
- Algar, James, 193
- Allégret, Yves, 191
- Altman, Georges, 47, 49
- Americanism, 161
- An American Tragedy*, 146
- Andrew, Dudley, 8
- Andrews, Dana, 44
- Anthropomorphism, 193, 196
- Apache*, 154
- Appointment in Samarra*, 127
- Arnold, Jack, 181
- The Asphalt Jungle*, 173
- The Atomic Age, 133
- Attack!*, 5-6, 130-134, 166, 241-242, 278
- Aurenche, Jean, 69
- Auteurism*, 15-18, 29, 34, 154, 190
- Avant-gardism, 8
- Aymé, Marcel, 161
- The Bachelor Party*, 5, 7, 163-165, 250-251, 284
- Bad Day at Black Rock*, 4, 6, 87-89, 224, 272
- The Baker's Wife*, 38
- Bambi*, 193
- Bardèche, Maurice, 92-93
- The Barefoot Contessa*, 85, 129
- Barrymore, Lionel, 51-53
- Battle of the Alamo, 105
- Battle of the Bulge: see "World War II"
- Battle of Caporetto: see "World War I"
- Baxter, Anne, 37
- Bazin, Janine, 3
- Bazin at Work: Major Essays and Reviews from the Forties and Fifties*, 19
- Baumarchais, Pierre, 51
- Beauty and the Beast*, 186
- Benedek, Laszlo, 101, 126
- Berlin Film Festival, 165
- Berlin, Irving, 96
- Berthomieu, André, 191

- The Best Years of Our Lives*, 4,
 6, 18, 42-46, 48-49, 126, 203-
 204, 265
 Bevan, Donald, 66
Bicycle Thieves, 14
Bigger than Life, 5, 7, 141-145,
 166, 246, 280
The Big Knife, 118, 127, 129-
 133
The Big Sky, 79
Bitter Victory, 5, 7, 166-168,
 253-254, 285
 Bizet, Georges, 93, 107
Blackboard Jungle, 4, 6, 20, 97-
 99, 101, 153, 228-229, 274
 Blaustein, Julian, 85
The Blood of a Poet, 35
The Blue Gardenia, 120
 Blum, Edwin, 68
 Blum-Byrnes Agreement, 9
 B-movie, 120, 122, 149
 Boetticher, Budd, 5, 7, 153-
 159, 189, 249-250, 283
 Bogart, Humphrey, 69
 Bonaparte, Napoleon, 29
 Bonestell, Chesley, 82
Boomerang, 43, 45, 78
 Borgnine, Ernest, 105
Born Yesterday, 139
 Borzage, Frank, 43, 177
 Bost, Pierre, 69
The Bottom of the Bottle, 5-6,
 18, 115-118, 238, 277
 Bowie, Jim, 105
 Brackett, Charles, 38
 Bradbury, Ray, 136
 Brand, Max, 190
 Brando, Marlon, 61, 76-77, 99
 Brasillach, Robert, 92-93
 Bresson, Robert, 16, 18
 Broadway (New York), 62
Broken Lance, 4, 6, 79-81, 155,
 221-222, 271
 Brook, Peter, 181
 Brooks, Norman, 132
 Brooks, Richard, 4-7, 97-99,
 101, 153-159, 229, 274, 281
The Brothers Karamazov, 155-
 156
 Brown, Clarence, 4, 6, 23-28,
 199-200, 263
*Bulletin intérieur de la Maison
 des Lettres*, 9
 Buñuel, Luis, 16
 Busch, Niven, 155
Bus Stop, 64

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, 13
Cahiers du cinéma, 3, 15-17,
 62, 130, 144, 151, 155, 182-
 183, 192, 197
 Caillois, Roger, 27
The Caine Mutiny, 4, 6, 69-71,
 81, 131, 216-217, 269
 Caldwell, Erskine, 27
 Cannes Film Festival (France),
 43, 45, 90, 104, 109, 116, 182
 Capra, Frank, 4, 6, 20, 24-25,
 31, 51-54, 127, 139, 175, 209-
 210, 266

- Carlson, Richard, 105
Carmen, 93, 107
Carmen Jones, 93, 107
 Carné, Marcel, 59
 Catholicism, 11-12, 78
Cavalcade, 103
 Cervantes, Miguel de, 182
 Chabrol, Claude, 15
 Chaplin, Charles, 4-7, 9, 16, 18,
 23, 29-33, 93, 110-114, 130,
 160-163, 200, 263, 276, 284
 Chayefsky, Paddy, 164
 Cheyney, Peter, 63
La Chienne, 120
 Christianity, 9-10, 18
Cinderella, 193-194, 196
 CinemaScope, 64, 74-75, 81-
 82, 86, 88, 91, 97, 106, 120,
 131, 144, 163, 188
 Cinerama, 74, 188
The Circus, 112
Citizen Kane, 19, 34-37, 172,
 184, 186
City Lights, 93, 110, 113
 Clair, René, 173
 Classicism, 16-18, 23, 36, 53,
 56, 64, 66, 78, 96, 108, 110,
 116, 154, 157, 188, 190
Clean Break, 171
 Clothier, William H., 159
 Clouzot, Henri-Georges, 48,
 191
 Cocteau, Jean, 16, 35, 61, 74,
 186
 “Le Coeur ignoble de Charlot”
 (Suarès), 113
 Cognet, Christophe, 181
 Cold War, 63
Come Back, Little Sheba, 108
 Comedy, 23, 32, 51, 63-64, 67-
 68, 83, 85, 110-113, 117, 122,
 127, 150, 161, 175-176, 189,
 193-194
 Comer, Sam, 84
 Communism, 9, 51, 63, 70, 81,
 119, 133
Comœdia, 113
 Connelly, Marc, 93
Conquest of Space, 4, 6, 82-86,
 222, 271
 Cooper, Gary, 39, 77
 Cotten, Joseph, 117
 Crawford, Joan, 79
 Crockett, Davy, 104-105
 Crosland, Alan, 96
Crossfire, 4, 6, 45, 47-50, 206,
 265
 Cukor, George, 139
 Curtiss, Edward, 183
 Czarism, 168

 Dalio, Marcel, 56
 Dandridge, Dorothy, 93
*The Daring Young Man on the
 Flying Trapeze*, 25
 Darvi, Bella, 85
 Dassín, Jules, 171
 Davis, Owen, 28
Daybreak, 59

- Dean, James, 91, 101, 143, 146, 148, 150-151
- Death of a Salesman*, 126
- "The Decay of Lying" (Wilde), 196
- Delannoy, Jean, 99
- Denon, Vivant, 51
- Depression (Great), 52
- De Santis, Giuseppe, 56
- De Sica, Vittorio, 14, 18
- "De Sica: *Metteur en scène*" (Bazin), 14
- The Desperate Hours*, 144
- Destination Moon*, 82-84
- Destry*, 190
- Destry Rides Again*, 190-191
- Detective Story*, 4, 6, 61-62, 213, 267
- Diary of a Sergeant*, 44
- Dietrich, Marlene, 190-191
- Diplomatic Courier*, 4, 6, 63, 213-214, 268
- The Disenchanted*, 76
- Disney, Walt, 25, 192-197
- Dixie Jubilee Singers, 94
- Dmytryk, Edward, 4, 6, 20, 43, 45-50, 69-71, 79-81, 131, 155, 206-208, 265, 269, 271
- Documentary, 12, 23, 31, 42-45, 48-49, 58, 82, 93-94, 98, 137, 142, 149, 181, 193, 196
- The Dominici Affair by Orson Welles*, 181
- Donen, Stanley, 116
- Doniol-Valcroze, Jacques, 79, 153
- Don Quixote*, 182, 186
- Dostoyevsky, Fyodor, 155
- Double Indemnity*, 41
- Douglas, Gordon, 83
- Douglas, Kirk, 85
- Drake, Stan, 176
- Dreiser, Theodore, 146
- Dreyer, Carl-Theodor, 16, 18
- The Drinking Den*, 38
- A Duel in the Sun*, 155
- Duhamel, Georges, 161
- East of Eden*, 4, 6, 90-91, 225-226, 273
- École normale d'instituteurs (La Rochelle), 8
- École normale supérieure de Saint-Cloud, 8
- L'Écran français*, 9, 37, 41, 46-47, 50, 54
- Éditions de l'Étoile, 3
- L'Éducation nationale*, 99, 109, 138, 162, 165, 180
- Eisenhower, Dwight D., 161
- Eisenstein, Sergei, 13, 16
- Elle*, 73
- Emmer, Luciano, 137
- Les Enfant terribles*, 35
- L'Esprit*, 19, 33
- "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema" (Bazin), 13, 19
- Existentialism, 12, 18, 56, 127

Expressionism, 13, 95

A Face in the Crowd, 161, 175

Farce, 68, 111, 122

A Farewell to Arms, 5, 7, 177-180, 256-257, 287

Fascism, 51, 156

Faulkner, William, 27

Faust, Frederick Schiller: see
"Brand, Max"

Femme ou demon: see *Destry*

Rides Again

Ferber, Edna, 146-147

Film noir, 121, 171

Film Technique, 13

First World War: see "World
War I"

Five Fingers, 63

Fleming, Victor, 23, 147

Fonda, Henry, 165

Le Fond de la Bouteille: see *The
Bottom of the Bottle*

Ford, Glenn, 98, 189

Ford, John, 23, 34, 73, 79, 154,
159

Formalism, 146, 171

For Whom the Bell Tolls, 177

Fountaine, William E., 94

Fourteen Hours, 4, 6, 55-59,
210, 266

Fragile Fox, 132

France-Observateur, 59, 62, 68,
71, 75, 78, 81, 86, 89, 91, 96,
102, 105, 114, 119, 122, 129,

134, 140, 145, 152-153, 159,
168, 173, 176, 188, 191

Freedom for Us, 173

Freemasonry, 35

"Frère Jacques," 157

Freudianism, 34, 90, 108

From Here to Eternity, 69, 98,
131

Fuller, Samuel, 16

La Fureur de vivre: see *Rebel*

Without a Cause

The Furies, 155

Gabin, Jean, 39, 59

Gable, Clark, 32

Gann, Ernest K., 72

Garfein, Jack, 175

Genina, Augusto, 56

Germany, Year Zero, 59

Geronimi, Clyde, 193

Giant, 5, 7, 146-152, 246-247,
280

Gillette, King C., 29

Giraudoux, Jean, 32

Godard, Jean-Luc, 15, 144

The Gold Rush, 5-6, 30, 93,
110-114, 237-238, 276

Golden Age (Hollywood), 120,
194

Gone with the Wind, 23, 147

Gotham Hotel (New York), 55

Grand Illusion: see *La Grande
illusion*

La Grande illusion, 66

Grant, Cary, 39, 63-64

- The Grapes of Wrath*, 23
 Gray, Coleen, 169-170
The Great Adventure, 193
The Great Dictator, 4, 6, 20, 29-33, 200-201, 263
Greed, 34
The Green Pastures, 93
 Griffith, D. W., 14

Hail the Conquering Hero, 175
 Hall, Alexander, 24
Hallelujah, 4, 6, 92-96, 226, 273
 Hand, David, 193-194
The Harder They Fall, 175
 Hardy, René, 166
 Harris, James, 171
 Haskin, Byron, 4, 6, 82-86, 222-223, 271
 Hathaway, Henry, 4-6, 43, 55-59, 63, 82-86, 115-118, 210-212, 266, 268, 272, 277
 Hawks, Howard, 4, 6, 15-16, 63-64, 79, 177, 214-216, 268
 Hawthorne, Nathaniel, 135
 Hayden, Sterling, 105, 169-170, 173
 Haynes, Daniel L., 94
 Hayward, Susan, 108-109
 Hayworth, Rita, 35
 Hays, Will, 39, 106
The Heart of Juliet Jones, 176
 Hecht, Ben, 63
The Heiress, 144
 Hemingway, Ernest, 177-180

 Herbert, F. Hugh, 107
The High and the Mighty, 4, 6, 72-75, 217-218, 270
High Noon, 79, 156
History of Film, 92
 Hitchcock, Alfred, 15, 23-24, 63
 Hitler, Adolf, 29-33
 Holliday, Judy, 139-140
 Hollywood, 9, 14-18, 24-25, 36, 38, 42-44, 53, 58, 63, 66, 69, 72, 76-77, 82, 100, 104, 106-107, 118, 120-121, 123, 130-131, 139, 146, 149, 154-155, 161, 163, 166, 171, 175, 181, 183, 191
The Holy Terrors: see *Les Enfant terribles*
House of Strangers, 80-81, 155
The House on 92nd Street, 43
 House Un-American Activities Committee, 71, 119, 161
How to Marry a Millionaire, 64
 Hudson, Rock, 151, 179
The Human Beast, 120
The Human Comedy, 4, 6, 18, 23-28, 198, 263
Human Desire, 120
The Hundred Faces of Cinema, 94
 Huston, John, 5, 7, 20, 61, 135-138, 173, 179, 186, 243-244, 279

- Idealism, 20
The Idiot, 155-156
I'll Cry Tomorrow, 5-6, 108-109, 236, 276
I'll Never Go There Anymore, 155
 Impressionism, 28
In a Lonely Place, 100, 143
It's Always Fair Weather, 116-118
It Should Happen to You, 139
It Started with Eve, 23
It's a Wonderful Life, 4, 6, 51-54, 175, 208, 266
I Was a Male War Bride, 64
- Jackson, Charles, 39
 Jackson, Wilfrid, 193
James Dean: Or the Evil of Life, 150-151
James Dean ou le mal de vivre: see *James Dean: Or the Evil of Life*
 Jancsó, Miklós, 15
The Jazz Singer, 96
Jenny Lamour, 48
Jezebel, 28
Johnny Guitar, 79, 100
 Johnson, J. MacMillan, 84
 Johnson, Nunnally, 5-6, 116, 123-129, 147, 241, 278
 Johnson, Van, 70
 Johnston, Eric, 106
 Jones, James, 69
 Jones, Jennifer, 124, 179
- Judaism, 30, 33, 47, 49
The Juggler, 71
Julie, 51
Julius Caesar, 77
 Jungianism, 34
- Kaufman, George S., 140
 Kazan, Elia, 4, 6, 43, 60-61, 76-78, 90-91, 161, 175, 212-213, 267, 270, 273
 Keighley, William, 93
 Kelly, Gene, 116-118
 Kennedy, Burt, 158
 Kenworthy, Paul, 5, 7, 192-197, 261, 289
 Keystone Studios, 111
The Kid, 112-113
Killer's Kiss, 171
The Killers, 177
The Killing, 5, 7, 169-173, 254, 286
 King, Henry, 177
A King in New York, 5, 7, 160-163, 250, 284
King Lear, 181
 Kingsley, Sidney, 62
 Kinney, Jack, 193
Kiss Me Deadly, 133, 171
Knock on Any Door, 100
 Korda, Zoltan, 177
 Korean War, 83
 Koster, Henry, 23
 Kramer, Stanley, 70, 81
 Kubrick, Stanley, 5, 7, 169-173, 254-255, 286

Kuleshov, Lev, 168

Lady and the Tramp, 193

The Lady from Shanghai, 182-185, 187

The Lady Vanishes, 63

Lamorrisse, Albert, 192

Landru, Henri Désiré, 29

Lang, Fritz, 5-6, 120-122, 239-240, 277

Lapierre, Marcel, 94

The Last Chance, 47

The Last Command, 4, 6, 103-105, 231, 275

The Last Hunt, 5, 7, 153-159, 248, 281

Le Breton, Auguste, 171

Lederer, Charles, 63

Leenhardt, Roger, 27

Leigh, Vivien, 61

Les Lettres françaises, 27

Ley, Willy, 82

Liberation (French), 8

Liberty Films, 54

Limelight, 114, 130, 160

Lindtberg, Leopold, 47

The Little Foxes, 19, 61-62

The Little Rebels, 99

The Lives of a Bengal Lancer, 57

The Living Desert, 193-194

Lloyd, Frank, 4, 6, 103-105, 231-234, 275

Logan, Joshua, 175

The Long, Hot Summer, 181

Lost Horizon, 52

The Lost Weekend, 4, 6, 38-41, 108, 202-203, 264

Lubitsch, Ernst, 63

Luciferianism, 136, 156

Ludwig, Edward, 16

Lumet, Sidney, 5, 7, 163-165, 252-253, 285

Luske, Hamilton, 193

The Lusty Men, 167

Lyndon, Barré, 82

M, 121

Macbeth, 145, 181, 186

Machiavellianism, 51

Mackendrick, Alexander, 175

MacLaine, Shirley, 190

MacMurray, Fred, 70

The Macomber Affair, 177

The Magnificent Ambersons, 4, 6, 34-37, 183-184, 201-202, 264

Making a Living, 114

Manichaeism, 95, 107, 160, 185

The Man in the Gray Flannel

Suit, 5-6, 20, 116, 118, 123-129, 147, 149, 240-241, 278

Man in the Shadow, 181-182

Mankiewicz, Joseph L., 63, 77, 80, 85, 129-130, 155

The Man with the Golden Arm, 5-6, 106-108, 234, 275

Mann, Anthony, 154-155, 158

Mann, Daniel, 5-6, 108-109, 236-237, 276

Mann, Delbert, 5, 7, 90, 98,
 163-165, 251, 284
 March, Fredric, 44, 124, 127
The March of Time, 42-44
The Marriage of Figaro, 51
 Marshall, George, 5, 7, 189-
 191, 259-261, 288
Marty, 90, 98, 164
 Marxism, 12
 Mason, James, 141, 144
 Masonry: see "Freemasonry"
 Maté, Rudolph, 149
 Mauriac, Claude, 166
 McCarthy, Joseph, 175
 McCarthyism, 88, 133
 McKelvy, Frank, 84
 McKinney, Nina Mae, 93-94,
 96
The Medium, 105
Meet John Doe, 51-52
 Melodrama, 20, 99, 107, 141,
 150, 157, 164
 Melville, Herman, 135-137,
 156
 Menotti, Gian Carlo, 105
 Mephistophelianism, 107
 Mérimée, Prosper, 93, 107
 Metalious, Grace, 174
 Milestone, Lewis, 23
 Milland, Ray, 38-39
 Minnelli, Vincente, 16
Mr. and Mrs. Smith, 24
Mr. Arkadin, 181, 184, 187
Mr. Deeds Goes to Town, 24

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington,
 175
 Mitchell, Margaret, 147
 Mitchell, Thomas, 53
 Mitchum, Robert, 49
Moby Dick, 5, 7, 135-138, 156,
 181, 186, 243, 279
Modern Times, 110, 113, 160
 Molière (Jean-Baptiste
 Poquelin), 32, 112, 160
Monkey Business, 4, 6, 16, 63-
 65, 214, 268
 Monroe, Marilyn, 64
Monsieur Verdoux, 29, 114,
 160
The Moon Is Blue, 107
 Morris, Oswald, 137
 Morrow, Vic, 99
 Mosjoukine, Ivan, 168
 M.P.A.A. (Motion Picture
 Association of America), 42,
 107
 Motion Picture Production
 Code (Hollywood), 39, 106-
 107
 Murch, Walter, 183
 Murnau, F. W., 15-16
 Musset, Alfred de, 112
 Mussolini, Benito, 32-33
Mutiny on the Bounty, 103
 Mutual Film Corporation, 111
My Heart's in the Highlands,
 25
My Sister Eileen, 23-24

“The Myth of Total Cinema”
(Bazin), 12

Naish, J. Carrol, 105

The Naked Spur, 158

Napoleon: see “Bonaparte,
Napoleon”

National Wildlife Federation
(U.S.A.), 156

Native Son, 47

Nazism, 31

The Nazis Strike, 31

Neorealism, 11, 14, 20, 37, 42,
57, 78, 93

Newman, Joseph M., 44

New Statesman, 182-183, 188

New Wave (French), 15

Night and Fog, 137

No Down Payment, 175

Noir: see *film noir*

Nouvelle vague: see “New
Wave (French)”

Occupation (Nazi), 8-9, 110

Oedipus complex, 58-59, 120

Of Mice and Men, 23

O’Hanlon, James, 82

O’Hara, John, 127

The Old Man and the Sea, 177

Olivier, Laurence, 145

On Dangerous Ground, 100

“One Trip Across”

(Hemingway), 177

“The Ontology of the
Photographic Image” (Bazin),
10

On the Waterfront, 4, 6, 20, 76-
78, 220-221, 270

The Oresteia, 78

Oscars (Hollywood), 38, 41

Othello, 181-182, 186

Pagnol, Marcel, 38

Painlevé, Jean, 30

Pal, George, 83, 85

Palance, Jack, 127, 133

Panavision, 188

Les Parents terribles, 61

Paris 1900, 58

Le Parisien libéré, 9

Pavan, Marisa, 125

Peck, Gregory, 118, 124, 137

Pereira, Hal, 84

Périnal, Georges, 162

Perri, 5, 7, 192-197, 261, 289

Personalism, 18

Peter Ibbetson, 57

Peyton Place, 5, 7, 174-176,
255, 286

Pharisaism, 128, 149

Picasso, 137

Pichel, Irving, 82

Picnic, 175

The Pilgrim, 113-114

A Place in the Sun, 146, 151

Poésie 45, 28

Poitier, Sidney, 99

- Politique des auteurs*: see *auteurism*
- Postmodernism, 13
- Preminger, Otto, 5-6, 93, 106-108, 235-236, 275
- Prévert, Jacques, 59
- Prometheanism, 136
- Protestantism, 108
- The Public Is Never Wrong: My 50 Years in the Picture Industry*, 74
- Pudovkin, Vsevolod, 13
- Pulitzer Prize (U.S.A.), 121
- Pushover*, 139
- Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?: see What Is Cinema?*
- Quine, Richard, 5, 7, 139-140, 245-246, 279
- The Racers*, 4, 6, 82-86, 223-224, 272
- Racine, Jean, 32, 55
- Raimu (Jules Auguste Muraire), 38
- Rameau, Jean-Philippe, 157
- Ray, Nicholas, 4-7, 20, 79, 81, 100-102, 127, 141-145, 151, 153, 166-168, 230-231, 274, 280, 285
- Realism, 9, 10-12, 14, 18-20, 36-37, 42, 45, 48, 56, 58, 68, 82, 91, 93-96, 98-99, 101, 104, 107, 116, 133, 137-138, 151, 154, 163, 165, 175-176, 188, 193-195
- Rebecca*, 23
- Rebel Without a Cause*, 4, 6, 100-102, 127, 129, 143, 151, 168, 230, 274
- The Red Balloon*, 192
- Reed, Carol, 186
- Reichelt, Franz, 59
- The Reluctant Dragon*, 197
- Renoir, Jean, 15-16, 18, 55-56, 66, 120, 130, 156, 170
- Resnais, Alain, 137
- La Revue du cinéma*, 9
- "Rhythm: A Story of Men in Macabre Movement" (Chaplin), 111
- Richard III*, 145
- Rieuepeyrou, Jean-Louis, 153
- Rififi*, 171, 173
- Riskin, Robert, 51
- Ritt, Martin, 175, 182
- Rivette, Jacques, 15
- Robinson, Edward G., 80
- Robson, Mark, 5, 7, 174-176, 255-256, 286
- Rochemont, Louis de, 43-44
- Rogers, Ginger, 63-64
- Rohmer, Éric, 11, 15, 158
- Rome, Eleven O'Clock*, 56
- Rommel, Erwin, 167
- Rooney, Mickey, 25
- Roosevelt, Franklin D., 24
- Rose, Reginald, 165
- Rossellini, Roberto, 15, 18, 59

- Roth, Lillian, 108
 Roueché, Berton, 144
The Rules of the Game, 55, 156, 170
 Russell, Harold, 44
- Sadoul, Georges, 94
 Saint, Eva Marie, 77-78
 Salgues, Yves, 150
 Santa Ana, Antonio López de, 103, 105
 Saroyan, William, 25-26, 28
 Sarris, Andrew, 17
 Sartre, Jean-Paul, 56
 Sartreanism, 12, 128
 Satire, 51, 64, 121, 126, 140, 160-161, 175
Scarlet Street, 120
 Schaefer, Jack, 146
 Schulberg, Budd, 76-77
 Scott, Randolph, 189
Script, 111
The Searchers, 159
 Second World War: see "World War II"
The Secret of Magic Island, 192, 194
 Ségol, Marcelle, 73
 Sentimentalism, 23, 31-32, 51, 113-114, 117, 148, 164, 170, 179, 193-194
The Set-Up, 57
Seven Men from Now, 5, 7, 153-159, 189, 248-249, 283
The Seven-Year Itch, 64
- Shakespeare, William, 145, 182, 186
Shane, 79, 146, 151, 156-157
 Sharpsteen, Ben, 193
The Sheepman, 5, 7, 189-191, 259, 288
Silly Symphonies, 194
 Simenon, Georges, 116
 Sinatra, Frank, 108
 Siodmak, Robert, 177
 Sirk, Douglas, 15, 149, 176
 Skouras, Spyros, 58
The Sniper, 71
The Snows of Kilimanjaro, 177
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 194, 196
 Socialism, 51
 Social-problem film, 42-46
The Sociology of the Novel, 27
The Solid Gold Cadillac, 5, 7, 139-140, 244-245, 279
Something to Live For, 108
Song of the South, 197
The Southerner, 130
 Spillane, Mickey, 171
The Spirit of '43, 25
Stagecoach, 73, 79
Stalag 17, 4, 6, 66-68, 216, 269
 Stalinism, 9, 133
 Steinbeck, John, 27, 90
 Stell, Aaron, 183
 Stéphane, Roger, 166
 Sternberg, Josef von, 120

- Stevens, George, 5, 7, 20, 54,
79, 108, 146-152, 156, 247-248,
280
- Stewart, James, 52-53, 190
- The Storm Within*: see *Les
Parents terribles*
- The Strange One*, 175
- The Stranger*, 183
- A Streetcar Named Desire*, 4, 6,
60-61, 212, 267
- Stroheim, Erich von, 16, 34
- Studio des Ursulines (Paris), 8
- Sturges, John, 4, 6, 23, 87-89,
177, 224-225, 272
- Sturges, Preston, 175
- Suarès, André, 113
- Sucksdorff, Arne, 193
- The Sun Also Rises*, 177
- SuperScope, 120
- Surrealism, 152
- "Swanee Shuffle" (Berlin), 96
- Sweet Smell of Success*, 175
- Tartuffe*, 160
- Tashlin, Frank, 161, 175
- Taylor, Elizabeth, 151
- Technicolor, 42
- "The Technique of *Citizen
Kane*" (Bazin), 19
- Teichmann, Howard, 140
- Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre, 12
- "Ten Feet Tall" (Roueché), 144
- Tessier, Carmen, 121
- Them!*, 83
- There's No Business Like Show
Business*, 64
- They Live by Night*, 100
- The Third Man*, 186
- 13 Rue Madeleine*, 43, 57
- The Three Caballeros*, 197
- Three Comrades*, 43
- 3-D (three-dimensional
stereoscopic film), 97, 163
- Three Forbidden Tales*, 56
- The Time of Your Life*, 25
- To Have and Have Not*, 177
- Toland, Gregg, 37, 45
- Tolstoy, Leo, 147
- Toni*, 56
- Touch of Evil*, 5, 7, 20, 181-188,
258-259, 287
- Tourane, Jean, 192, 194
- Tracy, Spencer, 80, 88, 177
- "The Tradesman's Return"
(Hemingway), 177
- Tragedy, 20, 38, 43, 45, 48, 56-
57, 95, 101, 108, 112, 127, 129,
133, 150, 172-174
- Tragicomedy, 38
- Transcendentalism, 9, 20
- Travail et Culture (Work &
Culture), 8
- Travers, Henry, 53
- Travis, William Barret, 105
- True-Life Adventures*, 193-194
- A True-Life Fantasy*: Perri: see
Perri
- The True Story of Jesse James*,
153

- Truffaut, François, 15, 130, 144
- Trzcinski, Edmund, 66
- Twelve Angry Men*, 5, 7, 163-165, 251-252, 285
- Twentieth-Century Fox Film Corporation, 58
- Umberto D.*, 14
- United Artists, 107
- The Unthinking Lobster*, 181
- Védrès, Nicole, 59
- Venice Film Festival, 98, 132, 141, 144
- Vera Cruz*, 154
- Verism, 66
- Verne, Jules, 84
- Vidor, Charles, 5, 7, 23, 257-258, 287
- Vidor, King, 4, 6, 92-96, 146, 155, 226-228, 273
- Viot, Jacques, 59
- Vogel, Virgil, 183
- Wagner, Richard, 32
- War and Peace*, 146
- Warde, John William, 55, 58
- Water Birds*, 193-194
- Wayne, John, 74
- Weidman, Jerome, 80, 155
- Weis, Don, 16
- Welles, Orson, 4-7, 9, 15-16, 19, 34-37, 130, 137, 145, 172, 181-188, 202, 264, 287
- Wellman, William, 4, 6, 72-75, 218-220, 270
- The Western, 116, 79, 81, 103-104, 116, 146, 149, 153-159, 189-190
- The Western, or the American Cinema Par Excellence*, 153
- Le Western: Ou le cinéma américain par excellence*: see *The Western, or the American Cinema Par Excellence*
- The Westerner*, 7, 154, 282
- What Is Cinema?*, 10-14, 19-20
- What Makes Sammy Run?*, 76
- While the City Sleeps*, 5-6, 120-122, 238-239, 277
- White, Lionel, 171
- Whitebait, William, 182-183, 188
- Why We Fight*, 25
- Wiene, Robert, 13
- Wilde, Oscar, 196
- Wilder, Billy, 4, 6, 20, 38-41, 49, 66-68, 108, 203, 264, 269
- Wilder, Robert, 149
- The Wild One*, 101
- Williams, Tennessee, 60
- Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?*, 161, 175
- Wilson, Sloan, 128, 147
- Wise, Robert, 57
- Wood, Sam, 177
- World War I, 35, 43, 66, 177
- World War II, 23-24, 43, 53, 66, 87-88, 100, 117, 167

Wouk, Herman, 69-70
Wright, Ralph, 5, 7, 192-197,
261, 289
Wright, Richard, 47
Written on the Wind, 149,
151, 176
Wyler, William, 4, 6-7, 12, 19,
23, 28, 42-46, 48, 54, 61-62,
126, 144, 154, 204-206, 265,
267, 282
Wynn, Keenan, 125

Yates, George Worthing, 82
Yordan, Philip, 80, 82, 155
You Can't Take It with You, 51
You Only Live Once, 120

Zanuck, Darryl F., 118, 123,
128
Zecca, Ferdinand, 38
Zinnemann, Fred, 69, 79, 98,
131, 156
Zola, Émile, 38
Zukor, Adolph, 74